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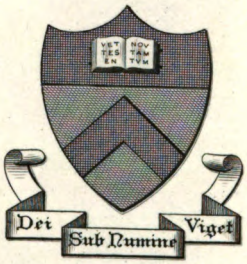
A History of England

John Lingard

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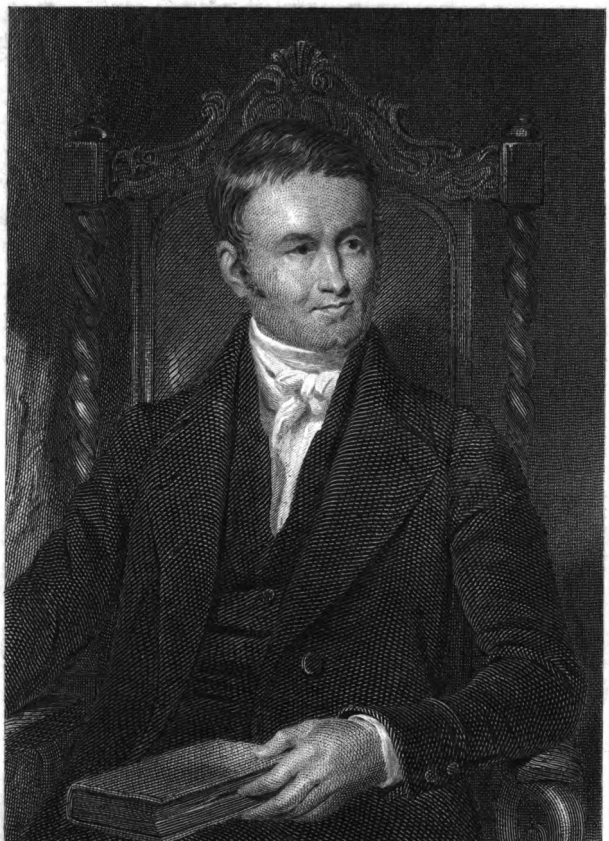
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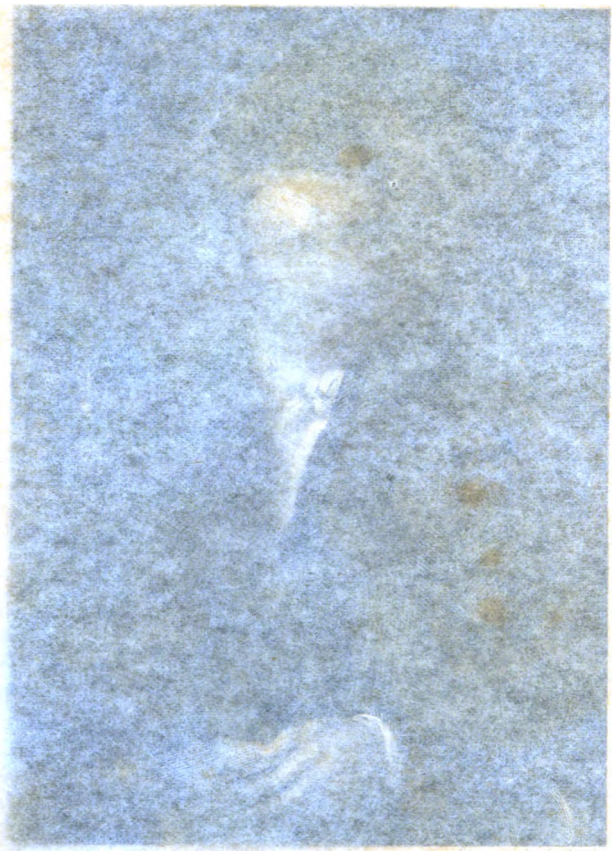
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John Luigard

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BY

JOHN HOWARD, D.D.

VOL. I.



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A

HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE FIRST

INVASION BY THE ROMANS

TO THE

ACCESSION OF WILLIAM AND MARY,

IN 1688.

BY JOHN LINGARD, D. D.

A NEW EDITION,

AS ENLARGED BY DR. LINGARD SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH

IN THIRTEEN VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1860.

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PREFACE

TO THE NEW AMERICAN EDITION OF DR. LINGARD'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

Of the merits of Lingard's History of England it is now unnecessary to speak. It has long been regarded by eminent scholars as the only standard history of England. *Not one of its statements has been yet proved erroneous.* The wonderful acuteness, diligence, and patience, which Dr. Lingard has displayed in the production of this great work, has no parallel in English literature. He devoted his whole life to it, and refused the highest honors of the church, on the ground that they would interfere with the task he had proposed to himself of writing an impartial and learned history of England.

The classical purity and beauty of its style invests the work with a charm which renders it almost as interesting to the general reader as it is to the historical student.

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No other history of England can be at all compared with it. Almost every page of Hume's history betrays the indolence or prejudice of its author. Macaulay's history, so far as published, embraces a period of not quite fifty years; and is regarded by competent scholars as an elaborate political essay, rather than an impartial and reliable history.

This edition has been reprinted from the last London edition, which left the author's hand but eighteen months before his death, having received many corrections and alterations. Indeed those numerous changes make it almost a new work. To those who would make themselves thoroughly acquainted with English history, this work of Lingard is indispensable.

To the numerous readers of Macaulay and Hume we would say, read Lingard. In all the qualifications of the historian, he far surpasses them. In style he is at least their equal; in accuracy and erudition he far excels them.

A stereotype edition, of the general arrangement of this, was published in 1837; and in 1849 and 1850 the edition appeared in London in ten volumes octavo from which this is printed. Dr. Lingard's preface to it shows how many new authorities had been brought to light, and with what wonderful diligence and acuteness he examined and searched through whatever

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documents or materials were calculated to throw light upon English history. The comprehensive but nice discrimination with which he sifted all the evidence bearing on the subject, and the even hand with which he held the balance, must make his work a beacon to future students who shall attempt to explore the difficult paths that lead to the various sources of the History of England.

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PRELIMINARY NOTICE.*

SINCE the year 1819, in which the first portion of this work was sent to the press, many new sources of information have been opened to the writer of English history. From time to time, ancient documents of high interest and indisputable authority have been rescued from oblivion, by searches made under the auspices of the Record Commission, or through the zeal and enterprise of literary societies, and of private individuals. It has been my endeavor to embody the substance of all such discoveries in this present library edition,—not, indeed, by the introduction of notes or dissertations at corresponding epochs, but by interweaving the new matter with the old in one continuous narrative throughout the work. At the same time, I have availed myself of the opportunity to fix the dates of events with greater precision, to correct former errors of the pen and of the press, and to alter certain paragraphs, occasionally whole chapters, of the last edition, by recasting or expanding them in conformity with the improvements which I wished to introduce.

The new information of which I speak is spread over every period of our history, from the mention of the Tin-islands by Herodotus, to the flight of James II., in the

* This notice, by Dr. Lingard, takes the place of all previous prefaces in the last English edition. — AM. ED.

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seventeenth century. In the Corpus Historicum, the late Mr. Petrie, with the aid of his fellow-labourers, has collected every notice that could be found of Britain in the Greek and Roman authors; and after them, in native and contemporary writers of any nation whatsoever, together with all such memorials as tended to throw light on the history of these islands, previously to the Norman conquest; a work of infinite labour, and of commensurate utility. Still it left room for additional research: much information was yet to be extracted from the remains of Anglo-Saxon literature: and a considerable portion of that information has been laid before the public by two eminent antiquaries and philologists, Benjamin Thorpe, Esq., in his "Ancient Laws and Institutes of England," and his text and translation of "The Homilies of Ælfric;" and John M. Kemble, Esq., in his very valuable "Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici."* These works open to us a pretty clear insight into the state of society and of literature, and the civil and religious polity which prevailed during the Anglo-Saxon period: a period the more interesting to Englishmen, because it was the cradle of many customs and institutions which exist among us even at the present day.

The first voluminous collection of documents after the conquest has been provided for us by the industry of the Rev. Dr. Giles, and regards the controversy between Henry II. and St. Thomas of Canterbury. It filled originally eight volumes in his Patres Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, and has been extended by subsequent publications to almost as many more. In these volumes may be found whatever was said and written in favour of the archbishop or against him, by friends or foes, natives or

* I do not mention his "Saxons in England," because the first volume of this edition had been printed before that work was published.

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foreigners, either before or soon after his death. They contain also narratives of his manner of life during his favour with the king, and subsequently to the great council at Clarendon; and the history of his exile, return, and martyrdom, related by eye-witnesses, his constant companions; besides a most numerous collection of letters on the same subjects, from the most celebrated characters in the western church at that period.

The next collection, next in point of time, but still more voluminous and more useful, is that of the Close and Patent Rolls, still extant in the Tower, appertaining to the reigns of John, and of his son and successor, Henry III. They have been most carefully edited by Thomas Duffus Hardy, Esq., under the direction of the Record Commission; and contain some thousands of entries, which reveal to us historic facts previously unknown, expose the intrigues and correspondence of John during his quarrel with Pope Innocent, and make us acquainted with the whole framework of the government, as the government was then exercised under the despotic sway of our more early monarchs.

This publication of national documents is followed by another, under the direction of the Record Commission, and edited by Sir Francis Palgrave, with the title of "Parliamentary Writs." It commences about the reign of Edward I., and exhibits to us copies of the original writs of summons to individuals, calling on them to attend the great councils or parliaments of the nation; writs for the election of members of the House of Commons, and returns of the persons so elected; writs to individuals, summoning them to the performance of military service, commissions of array, and a variety of matters connected with military levies. These instruments are accompanied with appendices of other records calcu-

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lated to throw light upon the former, to which has been added a full chronological abstract, to aid the inquirer in the investigation of any particular fact or summons. The immense value of the collection will strike us at once, if we reflect how, step by step, the despotic form of government introduced with the Norman kings was gradually moulded into that more regular shape which it afterwards assumed, and that we often learn from it the real causes and consequences of transactions which before its appearance were not clearly understood.

Several minor but not unimportant collections bring us down to the reign of Henry VIII., whose character and policy have been greatly elucidated by the publication, not long ago, of a multitude of papers and instruments preserved in the State Paper Office, and appertaining to that period. The first volume was published in 1830, and purported to contain the correspondence of Henry and his ministers of state, his ambassadors, envoys and agents, public and secret; with his commanders, military and naval; with his bishops, and with his council, when he happened to be at a distance from it. They offer us the most interesting information respecting the pride, ambition, and character of Cardinal Wolsey, and his power and downfall; respecting the proceedings of Archbishop Cranmer, in his court at Dunstaple, and his subsequent servility to the caprice of his imperious master; respecting the treatment and fate of the unfortunate queen, Catharine Howard, and her relatives; respecting the persecution by the king of Catholics and reformers, together with several other domestic matters, down to the close of his reign. In the following years four more volumes were added, regarding the government of Ireland and the king's correspondence with his commanders and agents on the northern borders on occasion of his hostil-

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ities with Scotland, and intrigues with the discontented in that kingdom. The reader will see at once the value of these volumes to the historian.

From Henry we pass to his daughter Elizabeth, whose long reign has been most prolific in voluminous collections, some as old as the last century, and others of much later date; as Sir Cuthbert Sharpe's Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569, the copious "Recueil des Lettres de Marie Stuart," by prince A. Jabanoff, the "Bares Correspondence," the "Leicester Correspondence," and the "Dépêches" of De la Mothe Fenelon, the French ambassador, who came to England about the close of the year 1568; a publication which we owe to the zeal and exertions of Charles Purtar Cooper, Esq., secretary to the Record Commission. During the seven years of his residence in England, De la Mothe Fenelon was commissioned by his court to make to the queen a proposal of marriage from the duke of Anjou, and afterwards from the duke of Alençon; to mitigate to the best of his power Elizabeth's hatred of the queen of Scots, and her displeasure against the duke of Norfolk; to appease her indignation at the massacre in Paris on the feast of St. Bartholomew, and to dissuade her from joining with the king of Spain in hostility to France. In the prosecution of these duties he made the most tempting offers to the queen's ministers and their dependents, and spent large sums of money in securing the services of the principal courtiers, and of certain ladies supposed to possess paramount influence over the mind of their sovereign. He had also the advantage of numerous private communications with the queen, both on questions of state, and others, of great delicacy, respecting herself; and the minuteness with which he describes her deportment and language on all these occasions, even on occasions of amusement and at royal ban-

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quets, imparts a freshness and charm of surpassing interest to his narrative. They exhibit to us the daughter of Henry VIII. in the several phases of her character without disguise, and in all her pride, and with all her foibles; though I must not conceal my suspicion that in his secret despatches to Catherine, the queen mother, he may occasionally indulge in fanciful embellishments on matters connected with the private life of the English queen.

The next large collection of documents comprises the "Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell," which have been collected and published with great care and accuracy by Thomas Carlyle, Esq. In these the character of the principal personage is not drawn, as was that of Queen Elizabeth, by the pencil of another, but by the man himself; and in them we may discover all the idiosyncrasies that marked his conduct from the time of his derangement at Huntingdon to his death at Whitehall. On that account these documents are well worth the serious attention of the historical student. I mean the letters and speeches themselves, not the running commentary with which the editor has accompanied them, in language most glowing and oracular. In every edition of this work I have allotted to Cromwell that praise which I thought and still think his due, — a much larger share than he has received from many other writers; but I feel no disposition to fall down before the idol and worship him, at the command of his panegyrist.

During the reigns of Charles II. and James II., the documents the most interesting to Englishmen are the despatches from the French ambassadors and agents, detailing their own proceedings, and the most important events in England and Holland. They have never yet been published. Dalrymple, long ago, inserted copies of some, and extracts from others, in his "Memoirs of

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Great Britain and Ireland;" and Mr. Fox, when he visited Paris in 1802, was careful to have many transcribed for his own use, of which some, but a few only, have been published. On this account Mazure, when he was preparing materials for his "Histoire de la Révolution de 1668 en Angleterre," sought out every despatch appertaining to the subject, from whatever quarter it might come; and as he possessed unrestricted access to the archives of the Ministère des Affaires étrangéres de France, transcribed, for the sake of accuracy, every separate piece with his own hand. He did not publish them, but was content to incorporate them in his own work.

It will undoubtedly be noticed that, with respect to the same subjects, I repeatedly quote passages from documents hitherto inedited: and it may with reason be asked from what source I procured them. I answer, from the very transcripts which were made by Mazure himself. After his death his papers came into my possession; and from them I was enabled sometimes to extract passages which he had passed over, because to him, a foreigner, they did not appear of so much importance as they must appear to a native; and sometimes to correct unintentional mistakes in Mazure's own history, when he occasionally suffered his prepossessions to give to passages an interpretation which the words themselves in those particular circumstances could not bear.

In addition to the voluminous compilations already mentioned, we owe numbers of important papers, and collections of papers, to eminent scholars, who have deserved well of their country in this department of literature; to Sir Henry Ellis, Sir Frederic Madden, the late Sir Harris Nicolas, Sir Thomas Phillips Bart., the Rev. Jos. Stevenson, John Gough Nichols, Esq., John

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Bruce, Esq., and many others, — too many, indeed, to be enumerated here; but their names will be recorded and their services acknowledged in the following volumes. There remains, however, one name, which shall not be passed over in silence, — that of a female writer, Miss Agnes Strickland, whose claim to the distinction is of a different kind, and peculiarly her own, — the discovery of a new mine of historic lore, previously unexplored; a mine which she has also worked with great success in those attractive volumes, her "Lives of the Queens of England."

In disposing of the new matter derived from these several sources, I have strictly adhered to the same rules to which I limited myself in the former editions; to admit no statement merely upon trust, to weigh with care the value of the authorities on which I rely, and to watch with jealousy the secret workings of my own personal feelings and prepossessions. Such vigilance is a matter of necessity to every writer of history, if he aspire to the praise of truthfulness and impartiality. He must withdraw himself aloof from the scenes which he describes, and view with the coolness of an unconcerned spectator the events which pass before his eyes, holding with a steady hand the balance between contending parties, and allotting to the more prominent characters that measure of praise or dispraise which he conscientiously believes to be their due. Otherwise, he will be continually tempted to make an unfair use of the privilege of the historian; he will sacrifice the interests of truth to the interests of party, national, religious or political. His narrative may still be brilliant, attractive, picturesque; but the pictures which he paints will derive their colouring from the jaundiced eye of the artist himself, and will therefore bear no very faithful resemblance to

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the realities of life and fact. Some of my readers may here, perhaps, recollect with what confidence the offence which I have just mentioned, that of sacrificing to party the interests of truth, was laid to my charge on the first appearance of this work; nor is it without feelings of honest pride that I now call to mind those statements of mine which were then received by popular writers of the day with bursts of indignation, and contradicted by them with sneers of contempt. I allude to the irreverent manner in which I had spoken of the Scottish hero, Sir William Wallace; to the unfair character — so it was deemed — which I had drawn of Archbishop Cranmer; and to the cause to which I had attributed the massacre at Paris on the feast of St. Bartholomew. More than twenty years have not elapsed, and what has been the result? 1. Every contemporary scrap of paper that could be discovered, having any connection with the name of Wallace, has been sought out and laid before the public; but not a single document has yet appeared to show that the hero ever performed any great service to his country during the seven years that passed between his loss of the great battle of Falkirk and his death on a scaffold in England, by command of Edward III. That death still appears to me to have been the apotheosis to which he was indebted for the worship afterwards paid to his memory in Scotland. 2. The character and conduct of the archbishop have been elucidated by his admirers from his register, from his correspondence at home and abroad, and from his printed works: still nothing has yet been drawn from these sources to prove that I had formed an erroneous estimate, either of his sincerity or of his courage. 3. The publication of the secret despatches from Salriati, the papal nuncio at Paris, has proved, beyond the possibility of a doubt,

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that the massacre was not the result of a premeditated plan, but rose, as I had maintained, out of an accident unforeseen and unexpected.

The result of these controversies may prove a useful lesson to those who are always ready to charge a writer with prejudice, if he dare to call in question notions which they have long cherished; the shibboleth, perhaps, of party, or remaining impressions of early education. Few persons are, indeed, aware how many statements may be found in most modern histories, which, though generally credited, have no foundation in fact, but are admitted at once, because they have long been repeated by writer after writer, without scruple or refutation. Such misstatements abound in the annals of almost every reign, and seem to have frequently originated in the conjecture or indolence of some popular historian.

For instance, we are generally told that Henry VIII. made his last will and testament on December 30 of the year before his death, that he executed it with his own hand, and that he observed in it all the provisions of the statutes passed in his reign. Of fraud or illegality no suspicion is ever hinted: but let the reader turn to the close of the fifth chapter in the sixth volume of this work, and watch the intrigues and manœuvres of the Camarilla which besieged the bed of the sick monarch, and monopolized his confidence. There he will see how the king was induced to remodel his will, and bequeath to the earl of Hertford, and that nobleman's party, the whole government of the realm during the minority of Prince Edward, his legitimate successor; how, towards the end of January, instead of subscribing this instrument with his own hand, he ordered it to be stamped, thus rendering it a nullity by the statutes of the twenty-

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eighth and thirty-first of his reign; how, by a fraudulent manœuvre, several gentlemen of the court were led to attest that the will had been signed by the king himself, in their presence, on the 30th of December; how his death was concealed by the same faction from the knowledge of the nation and parliament during three days; and how, when his demise was announced to the two houses by the chancellor, these skilful plotters were careful to make known the testamentary provisions in their favour, but most ingeniously contrived to preserve the instrument itself from inspection, that the absence of the royal signature might not be detected. It was a case, perhaps, without parallel in the history of nations. Yet every step in this long course of fraud and imposture is made evident by authentic documents, to which it is impossible to refuse credit.

It is long since I disclaimed any pretensions to that which has been called the philosophy of history, but might with more propriety be termed the philosophy of romance. Novelists, speculatists and philosophists, always assume the privilege of being acquainted with the secret motives of those whose conduct and characters they describe; but writers of history know nothing more respecting motives than the little which their authorities have disclosed, or the facts necessarily suggest. If they indulge in fanciful conjectures, if they profess to detect the hidden springs of every action, the origin and consequences of every event, they may display acuteness of investigation, profound knowledge of the human heart, and great ingenuity of invention; but no reliance can be placed on the fidelity of their statements. In their eagerness they are apt to measure fact and theory by the same visionary standard: they dispute or overlook every adverse or troublesome authority, and then borrow from

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imagination whatever may be wanting for the support or embellishment of their new doctrine. They come before us as philosophers, who undertake to teach from the records of history; they are in reality literary empirics, who disfigure history to make it accord with their philosophy. Nor do I hesitate to proclaim my belief that no writers have proved more successful in the perversion of historic truth than speculative and philosophical historians.

From these imaginative theories I pass to another topic. Some readers have been known to complain that in the course of my narrative I have so very sparingly introduced those many curious and miscellaneous subjects, which, however foreign to the general purpose of history, are usually welcome to readers of fanciful or limited tastes and pursuits. The objection reminds me of the following very pertinent passage from Tacitus, the Roman historian: — Nerone secundum L. Pisone consulibus, pauca memoriâ digna evenere, nisi cui libeat laudandis fundamentis et trabibus quîs molem amphitheatri apud campum Martis Cæsar extruerat, volumina implere; cùm ex dignitate populi Romani repertum sit res inlustres annalibus, *talia* diurnis urbis actibus mandare. — Tac. Annal. XIII. 31.

In the composition of these volumes I have repeatedly had occasion, like Tacitus, to lament the dearth of important incidents; and have been tempted, as he was, to look out for supplementary matter from some foreign source. But the same judicious rule which he had laid down for his guidance has in all such cases suggested itself to me. One thing for the annals of a great people, another for the journals of the city council: one for the history of England, another for the chronicles of an abbey, or the fortunes of a family, or the subject-matter

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of any of the several departments into which literature at present is divided. The historian, the genealogist, the typographer, the biographer, the antiquary, the architect, the ecclesiologist, the lecturer (not to mention numberless other candidates for literary fame), have all their peculiar spheres of action: but if the historian encroach on their domain, if he take upon himself their respective duties, he will probably desert the stately and dignified march of the historic muse, to bewilder himself in a labyrinth of dry details and tedious computations; or perhaps substitute, in the place of pure history, an incoherent medley of fragmentary and elementary essays, calculated rather to perplex than to enlighten the minds of his readers.

It had been my intention to accompany this prefatory announcement with remarks on several important passages in English history. For our annals, spread over so many centuries, are fraught with animating scenes of national glory, with bright examples of piety, honour, and resolution, and with the most impressive and instructive lessons to princes, statesmen, and people. But a long and painful malady, joined with the infirmities of age, has rendered me incapable of executing the task which I had marked out, and has admonished me to bid a final adieu to those studies with which I have been so long familiar.

The other editions of this work have been received with a kindness for which I ought to feel grateful, and have been honored with testimonies of approbation of which I have reason to be proud. The present edition, the last which I can expect to see, will, on account of more recent discoveries and improvements, contain much new and important matter. I here commit it, with all its imperfections, whatever they may be, without anxiety, to the

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kind indulgence of my readers, under the impression that it will not be found less worthy of their favour and approbation than any of its predecessors. With this flattering hope and anticipation before me, I now take my leave of the public, and — to borrow the words of the retiring veteran in Virgil —

"*Hic cæstus artemque repono.*"

HORNBY, DECEMBER 20, 1849.

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PREFACE.

THESE volumes contain the History of England from the first invasion by the Romans to the Revolution in 1688.

To the reader it can matter little what were the motives, which induced me to undertake this work: yet I may be allowed to say, that I was neither ignorant of the difficulty of the attempt, nor insensible to the merits and fame of those, who have preceded me in the same career. It is long since curiosity first led me to consult the original writers; and an intimate acquaintance with these authorities convinced me, that if much had already been accomplished, yet much remained to be done; that in the best of our histories there were errors to be corrected, and omissions to be supplied; and that on several important subjects new information might be brought forward, to elucidate what was obscure, and to rectify what had been misrepresented. To these objects I originally limited my plan: but to search out and remedy the defects of others was soon felt an irksome, as well as ungracious office: I abandoned the design, and ventured on a more arduous and laborious task, the composition of the present volumes.

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To render them more deserving of the public approbation, I did not hesitate, at the commencement of my labours, to impose on myself a severe obligation, from which I am not conscious of having on any occasion materially swerved: to take nothing upon trust; to confine my researches, in the first instance, to original documents, and the more ancient writers; and only to consult the modern historians, when I had satisfied my own judgment, and composed my own narrative. My object was to preserve myself from copying the mistakes of others, to keep my mind unbiassed by their opinions and prejudices, and to present to the reader from authentic sources a full and correct relation of events. These restrictions would indeed add to the toil of the writer; but they promised to stamp the features of accuracy and novelty on his work. How far I have succeeded, must be for the public to determine: but this, I trust, will be admitted, that whatever may be in other respects the defects of this History, it may fairly claim the merit of research and originality.

The labour was at first comparatively trifling. For the description of ancient Britain the writer must be content with the scanty information, which he may glean from the notices, scattered here and there in the works of classic antiquity. In the next stage of his progress he is introduced to a race of native historians, who, having received with the doctrines of Christianity the rudiments of literature, hastened to commit to writing the transactions of the age, or were satisfied to copy the records left to them by their predecessors. Their manner is jejune, their language homely, their selection injudicious: yet from

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them, with the aid of the Saxon laws and the Saxon councils, published by Spelman and Wilkins, it is possible to form an interesting, if not satisfactory, account of England previously to the Norman conquest. After that period the materials thicken upon the historian: in each succeeding reign they increase in number and importance; and, in proportion as he approaches to more modern times, they present a voluminous and formidable array of annalists and historians, of rolls and journals of parliament, and of collections of state papers, of dispatches of ambassadors, and of private letters of ministers and courtiers. All these it is his duty to peruse and compare; that he may ascertain the dates, may decide between the conflicting testimony of witnesses, may unravel the intrigues of statesmen, and may clear the truth from the rubbish which has been thrown over it by ignorance, or prejudice, or passion.

Among these sources of historical information there is one, which deserves his peculiar attention; the confidential correspondence of persons in high and official situations. This offers to him the most valuable assistance. It removes the veil which policy has drawn before the counsels of princes, reveals the secret springs which set in motion the machinery of government, and exhibits kings and ministers in their true characters, not as they affect to appear to the public eye, but as they really were in the privacy of their own houses, and in the circle of their familiar acquaintances. Without such documents history is an inert and spiritless mass; from these it may derive both life and vigour.

In addition, he must not fail to seek for informa-

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tion in the works of the continental historians. In matters of extraneous policy, in the contests and negociations between the sovereigns of this and of other countries, he will often be misled, if he trust solely to the fidelity of his English guides. It is his duty to contrast foreign with native authorities, to hold the balance between them with an equal hand, and, forgetting that he is an Englishman, to judge impartially as a citizen of the world. Even with respect to domestic history, the most authentic and interesting information may often be drawn from the reports made by foreign ambassadors in England to their respective sovereigns. In the course of the following pages the reader will see how much I am indebted, during the reign of Mary, to the dispatches of the imperial ambassador preserved in the library at Besançon in France; how much, during the reign of Elizabeth, to extracts from the papers deposited by Philip II. at Simancas in Spain.

Among later writers Dr. Henry ventured to deviate from the beaten track, and composed a history of England on a plan entirely new. He broke the time into small portions, and divided the subject into different heads, allotting to each portion a separate book, and to each head a separate chapter. This arrangement has met with many admirers; and must be acknowledged to possess the advantages of classification and perspicuity. But to me it appears liable to strong objections. It interrupts the continuity of the narration; it insulates facts which, to be properly understood, should be viewed in conjunction with others; it separates effects from their causes, which are often to be found in different chapters; and it deprives

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history of its native and most pleasing charm, by giving to it the semblance of a study rather than an amusement. For these reasons I did not hesitate to prefer the method consecrated by the practice of the great writers of antiquity, and by the adoption of the majority of their successors. It is easy for a skilful hand to interweave in a continued narrative every notice that may be necessary to delineate the manners and habits of thinking, the arts, the literature, and the legislative principles of the age.

The reader of these pages will soon discover that I advance but few pretensions to that which has been called the philosophy of history, and which on a former occasion I had the temerity to denominate the philosophy of romance *. It is the privilege of the novelist, as I then remarked, to be always acquainted with the secret motives of those, whose conduct and characters he delineates: but the writer of history can know no more than his authorities have disclosed, or the facts themselves necessarily suggest. If he indulge his imagination, if he pretend to detect the hidden springs of every action, the real origin of every event, he may embellish his narrative, but he will impose upon his readers, and probably upon himself. Much research and experience may perhaps have entitled me to form an opinion: and I have little hesitation in saying, that few writers have done more to pervert the truth of history than philosophical historians. They may display great acuteness of investigation, a profound knowledge of the human heart; but little reliance can be placed on the fidelity,

* In the advertisement prefixed to the fourth volume of the first edition.

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of their statements. In their eagerness to establish some favourite theory, they are apt to overlook every troublesome or adverse authority, to distort facts in order to form a foundation for their system, and to borrow from their own fancy whatever may be wanting for its support and embellishment. Of the ease with which history may thus be made to bend to any hypothesis, a strong illustration is furnished by the controversy respecting the unfortunate Mary Stuart. The leading facts of her story admit of no dispute; but her enemies have attributed to the Scottish queen one set of motives, her advocates another: from either, the explanation of her subsequent conduct naturally follows; and in one case she stands before us convicted of adultery and murder, in the other she appears an innocent and much injured woman.

When I consider the extent of this work, that the narrative runs through thirteen volumes, and comprises the transactions of more than sixteen centuries, it would be idle to flatter myself with the hope that it is exempt from occasional error. Those only, who are accustomed to historical composition, can be fully aware how difficult it is, in works of multifarious research, to guard at all times against mistakes. In defiance of the most vigilant eye, a wrong name, a false date, will often slip unobserved from the pen: sometimes a valuable authority, or an important circumstance will be overlooked or forgotten; and the writer, as he is always exposed to the danger, will occasionally suffer himself to be misled by the secret prejudices, or the unfair statements of the authors, whom it is his duty to consult. These errors, how-

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ever, let them be what they may, will, I trust, be found on examination comparatively few and unimportant. They certainly have not sprung from negligence or design. On the one hand I have spared no labour, shrunk from no investigation; on the other I am not conscious to myself of any feeling which should induce me to pervert the truth. It has been my constant endeavour to separate myself as much as possible from every party; to stand as it were aloof, the unconcerned spectator of the passing events; and to record them fairly in these pages, as they came in review before my eyes. That they should always appear to others in the same light in which they appeared to me, I cannot expect: but before the reader accuse me of prejudice, let him be assured that he is free from prejudice himself.

Before I conclude, I ought perhaps to observe, that where, not to load the page with a multitude of notes, I have classed several references in the same line, it is not pretended that each of them separately will fully authorize the statement to which it belongs. Some have perhaps furnished only particular circumstances; some may partially contradict the others: the text is the result from the comparison of them all; and should not be charged with inaccuracy, till all have been collated in their different bearings, and the value of each has been carefully ascertained.

* This preface was originally dated Hornby, June 14, 1823. It was written before the history was completed. This is omitted in the last London edition.

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LINGARD'S
HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

ROMAN BRITAIN.

Cæsar twice invades Britain—The British Tribes—Their Manners—Religion—Government—Gradual Conquest of Britain by the Romans—Its State under the Emperors—Conversion of the Natives to Christianity—The Romans abandon the Island.

It is to the pen of a Roman general that we are indebted for our first acquaintance with the history of Britain. Julius Cæsar, in the short space of three years, had conducted his victorious legions from the foot of the Alps to the mouth of the Rhine. From the coast of the Morini he could descry the white cliffs of the neighbouring island: and the conqueror of Gaul aspired to the glory of adding Britain to the dominions of Rome. The inability or refusal of the Gallic mariners to acquaint him with the number of the inhabitants, their manner of warfare, and their political institutions; and the prudence or timidity of Volusenus, who had been sent to procure information, but returned without venturing to communicate with the natives, served only to irritate his curiosity and to inflame his ambition. The Britons, by lending aid to his enemies, the Veneti, supplied him with a decent pretext for hostilities; and on the twenty-sixth of August, in the fifty-fifth year before the Christian era Cæsar sailed from Calais, with the infantry of two legions. To cross the strait was only the work of a few hours: but, when he saw the opposite heights crowned with multitudes of armed men, he altered his course,

A. C. 55.

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and steering along the shore, cast anchor before the spot which is now occupied by the town of Deal. The natives carefully followed the motions of the fleet, urging their horses into the waves, and, by their gestures and shouts, bidding defiance to the invaders. The appearance of the naked barbarians, and a superstitious fear of offending the gods of this unknown world, spread a temporary alarm among the Romans: but after a short pause, the standard-bearer of the tenth legion, calling on his comrades to follow him, leaped with his eagle into the sea detachments instantly poured from the nearest boats; the beach, after a short struggle, was gained; and the untaught valour of the natives yielded to the arms and the discipline of their enemies.

If the Romans were pre-eminent in the art of war, they were greatly deficient in nautical science. On the fourth night after their arrival, the violence of the wind augmented the usual swell of the waves at a spring tide; the ships, that had been hauled on shore, were filled with water; those which rode at anchor were driven out to sea; and a squadron, employed to bring the cavalry from Gaul, was entirely dispersed. The British chieftains, who had come to the camp to solicit peace, observed the consternation excited by these untoward events, and, having retired separately under different pretexts, concealed themselves, with their forces, in the neighbouring woods. Cæsar was not aware of their design, till he heard that the seventh legion, which had been sent out to forage, was surrounded and overwhelmed by a hostile multitude. The timely arrival of the rest of the army rescued the survivors from utter destruction: but the Britons, steady in their plan, despatched messengers to the neighbouring tribes, to represent the small number of the invaders, and inculcate the necessity of intimidating future adventurers by exterminating the present. A general assault was soon made on the Roman camp; and, though it proved unsuccessful, it taught Cæsar to reflect on the evident danger of his

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situation, if the inclemency of the weather should interrupt his communication with Gaul, and confine him, during the winter, to a foreign shore, without supplies of provisions. To save his reputation, he gladly accepted an illusory promise of submission from a few of the natives, and hastened back with his army to Gaul, after a short absence of three weeks. It is manifest that he had little reason to boast of the success of this expedition and on that account he affects in his Commentaries to represent it as undertaken for the sole purpose of discovery. But at Rome it was hailed as the forerunner of the most splendid victories; the mere invasion of Britain was magnified into the conquest of a new world; and a thanksgiving of twenty days was decreed by the senate to the immortal gods *.

The ensuing winter was spent by each party in the most active preparations. In spring the Roman army, consisting of five legions and two thousand cavalry, sailed from the coast of Gaul in a fleet of more than eight hundred ships. At the sight of this immense armament stretching across the channel, the Britons retired with precipitation to the woods; and the invaders landed without opposition on the very same spot which they had occupied the preceding year. Cæsar immediately marched in pursuit of the natives, but was recalled the next day by news of the disaster which had befallen his fleet. A storm had risen in the night, in which forty vessels were totally lost, and many others driven on shore. To guard against similar accidents, he ordered the remainder to be dragged above the reach of the tide, and to be surrounded with a fortification of earth. In this laborious task ten days were employed, after which the invaders resumed their march towards the interior of the country. Each day was marked by some partial A. C. 54.

* Cæs. de Bel. Gal. iv. 20—36. Dio, xxxix. 120. Cæsar, in his letters, described the island as of immense extent—another world: alium orbem terrarum. Eumen. Paneg. p. 174. Of his success, Lucan says plainly:

Territa quæsitis ostendit terga Britannis. *Lucan.* ii. 572.

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rencounter, in which the natives appear to have frequently obtained the advantage. It was their policy to shun a general engagement. Divided into small bodies, but stationed within hail of each other, they watched the march of the enemy, cut off the stragglers, and diligently improved every opportunity of annoyance. Their principal warriors, who fought from chariots, extorted by their skill and intrepidity the applause of the Romans. On the brink of a precipice, or on the rapidity of a descent, they guided their vehicles with as much safety as on the level plain. No danger appalled them. They drove fearlessly along the Roman line, espied every opportunity of breaking the ranks of the enemy, and during the heat of the action would run along the pole, leap on the ground, or regain their seats, as the events of the moment seemed to demand. If they despaired of success, they retired with rapidity: if they were pursued, they abandoned their chariots, and with their pikes resisted on foot the charge of the cavalry. It required all the art of Cæsar to inflict any serious injury on so active a foe. At length three of the legions with all the cavalry were sent out to forage, and their apparent disorder invited the Britons to attack them with their whole force. Descending from the hills, they poured through every opening, and penetrated as far as the eagles: but the veterans received them with coolness; the cavalry pursued them in their flight, and few were able to regain the mountains and woods. Dispirited by this check, many of the confederate tribes retired to their homes; and Cassibelan, king of the Cassii, the chief of the allies, was left to support the whole pressure of the war.

By repeated victories over his neighbours, Cassibelan had acquired high renown among the natives. The tribes on the right bank of the Thames had invited him to place himself at their head; and his conduct during the war seems to have justified the selection. Deserted by his confederates, he retreated into his own territories,

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and attempted to place the Thames between him and his pursuers. At the only ford he ordered sharp stakes to be fixed in the bed of the river; lined the left bank with palisades; and stationed behind these the principal part of his army But the advance of the Romans was not to be retarded by artificial difficulties. The cavalry, without hesitation, plunged into the river; the infantry followed, though the water reached to their shoulders; and the Britons, intimidated by the intrepid aspect of the invaders, fled to the woods. Such is the account of this transaction which has been given by Cæsar: but Polyænus attributes his success to the panic caused by the sight of an elephant. At the approach of this unknown animal of enormous magnitude, covered with scales of polished steel, and carrying on his back a turret filled with armed men, the Britons abandoned their defences, and sought for safety by a precipitate flight *.

The king of the Cassii was not, however, discouraged. To impede the progress of the enemy, he laid waste his own territories. By his orders the habitations were burnt, the cattle driven away, and the provisions destroyed, and, as the Romans marched through this desert, Cassibelan himself, with four thousand chariots, carefully watched all their motions. But the unfortunate chieftain, besides his foreign enemies, had to contend against the jealousy and resentment of his own countrymen. He had formerly subdued the Trinobantes, a contiguous nation. In the contest, their king Immanuentius had been slain; and his son Mandubratius was now an exile, and served in the army of the invaders. The Trinobantes offered to submit to the Romans, on condition that they should be governed by the son of Immanuentius; and several tribes, which bore with impatience the yoke of the Cassii, following their example, solicited the protection of Cæsar. By these he was conducted to the capital or principal fortress of Cassibelan,

* Polyæn. viii. 737. Lug. Bat. 1691.

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situated on the spot where afterwards Verulam was built, and near to the present town of St. Alban's. It was surrounded by a rampart and a ditch, and covered on every side by extensive marshes and forests. Even Cæsar admired the judgment with which the position had been selected, and the art with which it was fortified. Its defences, however, were easily forced by the Romans; and the cattle of Cassibelan, his principal treasure, became the prey of the conquerors.

The British king still waited the issue of his plans in another quarter. He had instructed the four chieftains of Kent to assemble their forces, assault the Roman camp, and set fire to the ships. If this attempt had succeeded, the Romans would have been involved in inextricable difficulties. But the men of Kent were defeated; and Cassibelan condescended to sue for peace. Cæsar, who feared the approach of the equinox, willingly prescribed the following conditions: that he should give hostages, should live in amity with the Trinobantes, and should furnish his share to the annual tribute which was to be imposed on Britain. The Romans immediately marched back to the coast, and as the fleet had been refitted, returned to Gaul in the month of September *.

Such were the petty results of this mighty expedition. The citizens of Rome celebrated with joy the victories of their favourite general: but the conqueror of Britain was not master of one foot of British ground. The inhabitants, however, and the productions of "the new world," became objects of interest to the more civilized nations of Greece and Italy; and the industry of writers was eagerly employed to satisfy the curiosity of the public. Of their works, many have undoubtedly perished; from those which remain has been gleaned the following account of ancient Britain, such as it is described to have been about the commencement of the Christian era.

* Cæs. v. 1—23. Dio, xl. 146. On the calends of September Cæsar had sent to Cicero an account of the campaign in a private letter. From the lan-

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The principal nations of Europe are shown, from the radical difference in their languages, to be descended from the three great families of the Celtæ, Gothi, and Sarmatæ: and from the countries which they have successively occupied, it appears that the Celtæ were the first who crossed the limits of Asia into Europe; that, as the tide of population continued to roll towards the west, they were pushed forward by the advance of the Gothic nations; and that these in their turn yielded to the pressure of the tribes of the Sarmatæ. At the dawn of history we find the Celtæ dispersed over a great part of Europe: in the time of Cæsar they occupied the principal portion of Spain, of Gaul, and of the British isles*. That conqueror, in describing the inhabitants of Britain, could speak from personal knowledge of none but the tribes that dwelt near the mouth of the Thames. These, he informs us, were of Belgic descent. Their ancestors had, at no very distant period, invaded the island, expelled the original inhabitants from the coast, and in their new settlements still retained the names of the parent states†. Beyond them dwelt other tribes less familiarized with the habits of civilized life. When he inquired after *their* origin, he was told that their ancestors were the spontaneous production of the soil: later discoveries showed that *they* were Celtæ, the descendants of the first colonists of Britain‡.

guage of Cicero, that it "was favourable or satisfactory enough," literas satis commodus de Britannicis rebus (ad Quint. Frat. l. iii. ep. 1), we may infer that he did not deem it very glorious to the arms of Rome. Had the expedition proved successful, we should probably have had a poem on the conquest of Britain from the pen of Cicero; for so he had promised to his brother Quintus, who accompanied Cæsar. "Modo mihi date Britanniam, quam pingam coloribus tuis penicillo meo." Lib. ii. Ep. 14.

* It is doubtful whether the Belgic tribes should be considered as of Celtic or Gothic origin.

† Cæs. ii. 3. v. 12.

‡ I shall not notice the fable of Brutus, the great-grandson of Æneas, who gave his name to the island, and whose descendants are said to have swayed the sceptre for many generations (Nennius says he extracted it ex veteribus scriptis veterum nostrorum. Edit. Bert. 104; which makes it older than Geoffry or Tyssilio): nor the dreams of more recent antiquaries, who have sought out the patriarch of the Cymri in the ark of Noah, and conducted him and his children through a thousand perils to Britain. The triads have given us the names, and, in some instances, the origin of the three primeval tribes that settled in Britain; of the three foreign tribes, that were peaceably admitted; and of the three usurping tribes, that obtained possession of the

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The number of the inhabitants in the districts which fell under his observation, astonished the Roman general: and there is reason to believe that many other districts were equally well peopled *. The population of the whole island comprised above forty tribes, of which several, while they retained their former appellations, had been deprived of their independence, at the same time that others, amid the revolutions of two or three centuries, had risen to a high pre-eminence of power. The long tract of land to the south of the Severn and the Thames was unequally portioned among ten nations, of which the principal were the Cantii, or men of Kent; the Belgæ, or inhabitants of the present counties of Hampshire and Wilts; and the Damnonii, who, from the river Ex, had gradually extended themselves to the western promontory. Across the arm of the sea, now called the Bristol Channel, the most powerful was the tribe of the Silures. From the banks of the Wye, their original seat, they had carried their arms to the Dee and the ocean; and their authority was acknowledged by the Ordovices and the Dimetæ, the inhabitants of the northern mountains, and of the western district of Wales. On the eastern coast of the island, between the Thames and the Stour, lay the Trinobantes, whose capital was London; and from the Stour to the Humber stretched the two kindred nations of the Iceni, called Cenimagni and Coitanni. The Dobuni and Cassii, confederate tribes under the rule of Cassibelan, extended along the left bank of the Thames, from the Severn to the Trinobantes; and above them dwelt the Carnabii and several clans of minor consequence. The Brigantes were the most powerful of all the British nations. They were bounded by the Humber on the south, and by the

greater part of the island. But whatever may be the antiquity of the triads, their testimony must be doubtful, as being founded either on oral tradition, or on fictions framed originally to solve appearances. For Gildas informs us that in his time there did not exist among his countrymen any historical documents: quippe quæ, si qua fuerint, aut ignibus hostium deleta, aut civium exilii classe longius deportata, non compareant. Gild. edit. Bert. p. 69.

* Hominum est infinita multitudo. Cæs. v. 12. Πολυάνθρωπος γῆσος. Diod. Sic. v. 347. Brigantes, civitas numerosissima. Tac. Agric. c. 17.

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Tyne on the north; and had subdued the Volantii and Sistuntii of the western coast. To the north of the Brigantes were five tribes, known by the general appellation of Maætæ: and beyond these wandered amid the lakes and mountains various clans, among which the Caledonians claimed the praise of superior courage, or superior ferocity *.

By the Roman writers all the natives of Britain are indiscriminately denominated *barbarians*, a term of indefinite import, which must vary its signification with the subject to which it is applied. Though far removed from the elegance and refinement of their invaders, the Belgic tribes of the south might almost claim the praise of civilization, in comparison with their northern brethren. Their dress was of their own manufacture. A square mantle covered a vest and trowsers, or a deeply plaited tunic of braided cloth; the waist was encircled with a belt; rings adorned the second finger of each hand; and a chain of iron or brass was suspended from the neck †. Their huts resembled those of their Gallic neighbours. A foundation of stone supported a circular wall of timber and reeds; over which was thrown a conical roof, pierced in the centre for the two-fold purpose of admitting light and discharging the smoke ‡. In husbandry they possessed considerable skill. They had discovered the use of marl as a manure; they raised more corn than was necessary for their own consumption; and, to preserve it till the following harvest, they generally stored it in the cavities of rocks §. But beyond the borders of the southern tribes, these faint traces of civilization gradually disappeared. The midland and western nations were unacquainted with either agriculture or manufactures. Their riches consisted in

* Ptolem. viii. 2. Ricard. Corin. i. 6. Whitaker's Manchester, i. 91; ii. 201.

† Plin. viii. 48; xxxiii. 1. Dio Nic. in Nerone, p. 169. Whitaker's Manchester, vii. 5

‡ Cæs. v. 12. Diod. Sic. v. p. 347. Strabo, iv. 197.

§ Plin. Hist. Nat. xvii. 6. 8. Diod. Sic. v. p. 347.

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the extent of their pastures, and the number of their flocks. With milk and flesh they satisfied the cravings of hunger; and, clothed in skins, they bade defiance to the inclemency of the seasons*. But even sheep were scarcely known in the more northern parts; and the hordes of savages who roamed through the wilds of Caledonia often depended for support on the casual produce of the chase. They went almost naked; and sheltered themselves from the weather under the cover of the woods, or in the caverns of the mountains. Their situation had hardened both their minds and bodies. If it had made them patient of fatigue and privation, it had also taught them to be rapacious, bloody, and revengeful. When Severus invaded their country, the Roman legions were appalled at the strength, the activity, the hardihood, and ferocity of these northern Britons†.

The superior civilization of the southern tribes was attributed by historians to their intercourse with the strangers whom the pursuits of commerce attracted to their coast‡. When the Spanish ores began to be exhausted, the principal supply of tin was sought from the mines of Britain. The first who exported this metal from the island, and conveyed it to the different ports in the Mediterranean, were certain Phenician adventurers from Cadiz. To monopolize so valuable a branch of commerce, they carefully concealed the place from the knowledge of their neighbours; and about five centuries before the birth of Christ, Herodotus, the father of profane history, candidly acknowledged that he had been unable to discover the real position of the "Cassiterides, or Tin-islands§." The Phenicians of Carthage were more successful. Anxious to share in the trade with their brethren of Cadiz, Hanno and Himilco undertook

* Cæs. v. 14.
† Mela, iii. p. 264. Dio Nic. in Severo, p. 340. Herodian, iii. 47.
‡ Cæs. v. 14. Diod. Sic. v. 347.
§ Strab. iii. 175. Plin. vii. 56. Herod. iii. 903. Lug. Bat. 1715.

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separate voyages of discovery. Having passed the Straits, Hanno turned to the left, and explored the coast of Africa: Himilco, shaping his course to the north, crept along the shore of Spain, stretched, by accident or design, across the ocean, and in the fourth month discovered the object of his voyage. The Œstrymnides (so the tin-islands are called in his journal, which was extant as late as the fifth century) were distant two days' sail from "the sacred isle of the Hibernians," and that isle lay near to the isle of the Albions *. The success of the Carthaginians awakened the hopes of the Grecian colonists of Marseilles; and Pytheas, their most celebrated navigator, during his voyage in the northern seas, had also the good fortune to discover the Cassiterides †. They were ten in number, abounding in mines of tin and lead, and divided by a narrow but boisterous strait from the coast of the Damnonii. The largest was called Silura or Sigdelis, a name in which may be discovered the origin of their present appellation, "the Scilly isles." Nine out of the ten were inhabited: and the natives are described as a peaceful and industrious race, much addicted to habits of religious worship and divination. They wore long tunics of a dark colour; were unacquainted with the use of money; had no fixed places of habitation, and crossed from isle to isle in boats of wicker-work covered with leather ‡.

* Fest. Avien. Ora. Marit. v. 117. 410.

Ast hinc duobus in *sacram* (sic insulam
Dixere prisci), solibus cursus rati est,
Eamque late gens Hibernorum colit. Ibid. v. 108.

Why *Sacram?* Diodorus says it was called *Iris*, the very name by which it is known to the natives at this day: την ονομαζομενην ιριν. Diod. Sic. 355. May not the resemblance between ιριν and ιερην have given rise to the epithet "sacred?"

† Plin. ii. 75. Voss. de Hist. Græc. iv. The Romans also, after several fruitless attempts, discovered the Cassiterides. A story is told of a Phenician merchant, who, seeing himself closely watched by a Roman trader, ran his ship ashore, that he might not disclose the secret to a rival. He was recompensed for his loss out of the public treasury.—Strab. iii. 175.

‡ Sol. xxii. 42. Fest. Avien. v. 95. Strab. iii. 175. The encroachments of the sea, by gradually inundating the low lands, have multiplied the number of islets.

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By these successive discoveries the trade was at last thrown open to different nations. Publius Crassus, a Roman officer, who having, in a visit to the Cassiterides, observed that the metal lay a short depth below the surface, and that the natives were beginning to devote themselves to the practice of navigation, described on his return the real position of the islets to those merchants, who wished to trade directly with the inhabitants, though the voyage thither would be longer than the usual passage from Gaul to Britain. The tin was bought up by factors on the coast of the Mediterranean, and conveyed over land to the remote provinces of India*. But the navigation by the Pillars of Hercules was now abandoned as too expensive and dangerous. The British miners having cast their tin into square blocks, conveyed it to the Isle of Wight, the general deposit. Thence it was exported by Gallic traders to the mouths of the Seine, the Loire, or the Garonne; and ascending these rivers, was carried across the land on the backs of horses, till it could be conveyed by water carriage to the great commercial cities of Marseilles or Narbonne†. In return for this metal, so highly prized by the ancient nations, the Britons received articles of inferior value to the importers, but of high estimation to an uncivilized people; salt for the preservation of provisions, earthenware for domestic use, and brass for the manufacture of arms and ornaments‡.

The enterprise and researches of the foreigners quickened the industry of the natives. Tin had originally formed the sole article of their commerce; to the exportation of tin was soon added that of hides, which were procured in immense numbers from the tribes in the interior; lead was next extracted from veins open to the day; and then followed a most valuable acquisition, the discovery and use of iron§. But report had exaggerated the productions of the country far beyond their

* Strab. iii. 175. Plin. xxxiv. 17. † The whole journey was performed in about thirty days. See Diod. Sic. v. 346, 347, 361. Strab. iii. 147.
‡ Strab. iii. 175. § Plin. iv. 22; xxxiv. 17. Cæs. v. 12.

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real value: and at the time of the invasion, the Romans flattered themselves with the hope of conquering an island, of which the shores abounded with pearls, and the soil with ores of the more precious metals. Their avarice was, however, defeated. Of gold or silver not the smallest trace was discovered*; nor were the British pearls of a size or colour which could reward the labour of the collector†. Yet the invasion produced one advantage to the natives. They sought and at last discovered ores of the very metals after which Roman avarice had so anxiously but fruitlessly inquired: and the British exports, at the commencement of the Christian era, comprised, if we may credit a contemporary and well-informed writer, corn and cattle, gold and silver, tin, lead and iron, skins, slaves, and dogs‡.

Of the peculiar customs of the Britons but few and imperfect notices have been transmitted to posterity. One strange and disgusting practice, that of painting the body, seems to have prevailed in many parts of the island. For this purpose the southern tribes employed a blue dye, extracted from woad, which gave to them, in the eyes of foreigners, the appearance of Ethiopians. It was adopted equally by both sexes; and was consecrated in their estimation by ceremonies of religion§. Connected with this was the still more barbarous practice of tatooing, so long in use among the more northern Britons. At an early age, the outlines of animals were impressed with pointed instruments in the skin: a strong infusion of woad was rubbed into the punctures; and the figures, expanding with the growth of the body, retained their original appearance through life. The Briton was vain of this hideous ornament: and to ex-

* Illud cognitum est, neque auri neque argenti scrupulum esse ullum in illa insula. Cic. Ep. ad Fam. vii. 7; ad Att. iv. 10.

† Parvos atque decolores. Plin. ix. 35. Origen says, they were cloudy, and less bright than those of India. Com. in Matth. 211. Yet Cæsar dedicated to Venus a breastplate ornamented with pearls, which he pretended to have found in Britain. Plin. Ibid. ‡ Tac. Vit. Agric. xii. Strab. iv. 199.

§ Plin. xxii. 1. Mela, iii. 6. Cæsar (v. 14) says: omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt. As, however, he had not seen any of the more remote tribes, it is uncertain whether his observation should be applied to them.

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hibit it to the eyes of his enemies, he was always careful to throw off his clothes on the day of battle *.

The religion of the natives was that of the Druids, whether it had been brought by them from Gaul, as is the more natural supposition, or, as Cæsar asserts, had been invented in the island. The druids adored, under different appellations, the same gods as the Greeks and Romans. Pluto they considered as their progenitor: Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva were severally worshipped: but to Mercury, as the inventor of the useful arts, they paid a more particular veneration †. To these, the superior gods, they added, like other polytheists, a multitude of local deities, the genii of the woods, rivers, and mountains ‡. Some fanciful writers have pretended that they rejected the use of temples through a sublime notion of the Divine immensity: perhaps the absence of such structures may, with more probability, be referred to their want of architectural skill. On the oak they looked with peculiar reverence. This monarch of the forest, from its strength and durability, was considered as the most appropriate emblem of the Divinity §. The tree and its productions were deemed holy: to its trunk was bound the victim destined for slaughter; and of its leaves were formed the chaplets worn at the time of sacrifice. If it chanced to produce the mistletoe, the whole tribe was summoned: two white heifers were immolated under its branches; the principal druid cut the sacred plant with a knife of gold; and a religious feast terminated the ceremonies of the day ‖.

The druids were accustomed to dwell at a distance

* Solin. xxii. 43. Herod. iii. 47. It was practised by the Picts as late as the fifth century.

Perlegit exangues Picto moriente figuras.—*Claud. de Bel. Get.* v. 165.

† Cæs. vi. 15, 16. ‡ Gild. ii. Many of these local deities are named in inscriptions which still exist.

§ Ἀγαλμα δε Διος πιλωτικον υψηλη δενδρος. Max. Tyr. Dissert. xxxviii. p. 67. ‖ Plin. xvi. 44.

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from the profane, in huts or caverns, amid the silence and gloom of the forest. There, at the hours of noon or midnight, when the Deity was supposed to honour the sacred spot with his presence, the trembling votary was admitted within a circle of lofty oaks, to prefer his prayer, and listen to the responses of the minister*. In peace they offered the fruits of the earth: in war they devoted to the god of battles the spoils of the enemy. The cattle were slaughtered in his honour; and a pile formed of the rest of the booty was consecrated as a monument of his powerful assistance†. But in the hour of danger or distress human sacrifices were deemed the most efficacious. Impelled by a superstition, which steeled all the feelings of humanity, the officiating priest plunged his dagger into the breast of his victim, whether captive or malefactor; and from the rapidity with which the blood issued from the wound, and the convulsions in which the sufferer expired, announced the future happiness or calamity of his country‡.

To the veneration which the British druids derived from their sacerdotal character, must be added the respect which the reputation of knowledge never fails to extort from the ignorant. They professed to be the depositaries of a mysterious science, far above the comprehension of the vulgar: and their schools were opened to none but the sons of illustrious families. Such was their fame, that the druids of Gaul, to attain the perfection of the institute, did not disdain to study under their British brethren§. With them, as with similar orders of priests among the ancients, a long course of preparatory discipline was required: and we are told that many had the patience to spend no less than twenty years in

* Mela, iii. 243. Luc. i. v. 453; iii. v. 399. 423. Tac. Ann. xiv. 20. I have not noticed the circles of unhewn stones, the remains of which still exist at Stonehenge, Abury, &c., because I do not find that such stones are ever mentioned by ancient writers, as appendages to places of worship among the Celtæ.

† Cæs. iv. 16.

‡ Diod. Sic. v. 354. Tac. Ann. xiv. 30. Cæs. vi. 15. Plin. xxx. 1. Strab. iv. 198.

§ Cæs. vi. 19.

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this state of probation. To the initiated they enjoined the most inviolable secrecy; and, that the profane might not become acquainted with their doctrines, the use of letters was prohibited, and each precept was delivered in verse by the teacher, and committed to memory by the disciple *.

Of tenets thus anxiously concealed, it is not to be expected that much should be distinctly known: the following particulars have been collected from the few notices contained in the ancient historians, compared with the doctrines peculiar to the bards. The druids professed to be acquainted with the nature, the power, and the providence of the Divinity; with the figure, size, formation, and final destruction of the earth; with the stars, their position and motions, and their supposed influence over human affairs †. They practised the art of divination. Three of their ancient astrologers were able, it is said, to foretell whatever should happen before the day of doom; and their skill in magic was so great, that, according to Pliny, the Persians themselves might be thought to be their disciples ‡. To medicine also they had pretensions: but their knowledge was principally confined to the use of the mistletoe, vervain, savin, and trefoil; and even the efficacy of these simples was attributed not to the nature of the plants, but to the influence of prayers and incantations §. The great objects of the order were, according to themselves, "to reform "morals, to secure peace, and to encourage goodness:" and the following lesson, which they inculcated to the people, was certainly conducive to those ends: "The "three first principles of wisdom are, obedience to the "laws of God, concern for the good of man, and fortitude under the accidents of life ‖." They also taught

* Cæs. vi. 13. Ἀπογραφαδες. Diog. Laert. in proem. p. 5. Amstel. apud West. † Cæs. vi. 13. Mela, iii. 243. Amm. Mar. xv. 427.
‡ Mela, iii. 243. Plin. xxx. 1. Solin. xxii. 42. Diod. Sic. v. 354. Cic. de Div. i. 41. Triad, 89. § Plin. xvi. 44; xxiv. 11; xxv. 9; xxx. 1.
‖ These two triads may be seen in Davis (Celtic Researches, 171. 182). It is remarkable that the latter had been translated by Diogenes Laertius

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the immortality of the human soul: but to this great truth they added the absurd fiction of metempsychosis *. Man is placed, according to their doctrine, in the circle of *courses*. good and evil are placed before him for his selection. If he prefer the former, death transmits him from the earth into the circle of *felicity*: but if he prefer the latter, death returns him into the circle of *courses*: he is made to do penance for a time in the body of a beast or reptile; and then permitted to reassume the form of man. According to the predominance of vice or virtue in his disposition, a repetition of his probation may be necessary: but, after a certain number of transmigrations, his offences will be expiated, his passions subdued, and the circle of felicity will receive him among its inhabitants †. It was to this doctrine that the Romans attributed that contempt of death which was so conspicuous in the Celtic nations ‡.

It will not excite surprise that men, whose office and pretended attainments raised them so much above the vulgar, should acquire and exercise the most absolute dominion over the minds of their countrymen. In public and private deliberations of any moment, their opi-

many centuries ago. Σεῖον θεους, και μηδεν κακον δραν, και ανδρειαν ασκειν. (Diog. Laert. in proem. p. 5.)

* Cæs. vi. 13. Mel. iii. 243. Diod. Sic. v. 352. Strabo, iv. 197. I have added an explanation of the metempsychosis from the writings of the bards. It is so improbable that such a system should have been invented after the introduction of Christianity, that I think it may fairly be considered a relic of the druidical doctrine. For the same reason I would attribute to these ancient priests the rhyn or mysterious language, so often mentioned by the bards. To every tree and shrub, to their leaves, flowers, and branches, they seem to have affixed a fanciful and symbolical meaning: and these allegorical substitutes for the real names of beings and their properties must have formed, in their numerous combinations, a species of jargon perfectly unintelligible to any but the adepts. This acquirement appears to have been prized for many centuries in proportion to its difficulty and folly. Taliessin boasts with complacency, that he is acquainted with every *sprig* in the eave of the diviner: that he knows the intent of the *trees* in the memorial of compacts: that he knows both good and evil. See Davis, Celtic Researches, 245—253.

† See the triads in William's Poems, ii. 227, and the epitome of them in Davis, p. 185.

‡ Cæs. vi. 13. Mela, iii. 243.

Inde ruendi
In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
Mortis, et ignavum *redituræ* parcere vitæ.—*Lucan*, i. 460.

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nion was always asked, and was generally obeyed. By their authority peace was preserved; in their presence passion and revenge were silenced: and at their mandate contending armies consented to sheathe their swords. Civil controversies were submitted to their decision; and the punishment of crimes was reserved to their justice. Religion supplied them with the power of enforcing submission. Disobedience was followed by excommunication: and from that instant the culprit was banished from their sacrifices, cut off from the protection of the laws, and stigmatized as a disgrace to his family and country *.

As the druids delivered their instructions in verse, they must have had some notion of poetry, and we find among them a particular class distinguished by the title of Bards. By the triads their origin is ascribed to certain personages, who, from their names, appear to be enigmatical, rather than real, characters †. The bard was a musician as well as a poet: and he constantly accompanied with his voice the sounds of his harp. Every chieftain retained one or more of them in his service. They attended in his hall; eulogized his bounty and his valour; and sang the praises and the history of their country. At the festive board, in the hour of merriment and intoxication, the bard struck his harp; and every bosom glowed with admiration of the heroes whom he celebrated, and of the sentiments which he aimed to inspire. He accompanied the chief and his clan to the field of battle; to the sound of his harp they marched against the enemy; and in the heat of the contest animated themselves with the hope that their actions would be renowned in song, and transmitted to the admiration of their posterity ‡.

* Cæs. vi. 12. Diod. Sic. v. 354. Strabo, iv. 197. Dio. Chrys. orat. xlix. p. 538.

† Triad, 58.

‡ Diod. Sic. v. p. 354. Athenæus, vi. p. 246. Ammian. Mar. xv. 24. Strabo, iv. 197.

Vos quoque, qui fortes animas, belloque peremptas
Laudibus in longum vates dimittitis ævum,
Plurima securi fudistis carmina Bardi.—*Lucan*, i. v. 447.

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The form of government adopted by the British tribes has scarcely been noticed in history. In some, the supreme authority appears to have been divided among several chieftains; in most, it had been intrusted to a single individual; but in all, the people continued to possess considerable influence. With respect to the succession, there are instances in which the father had portioned his dominions among his children, and others in which the reigning prince left his crown to his widow, who both exercised the more peaceful duties of royalty, and with arms in her hands conducted her subjects to the field of battle*. But in the absence of any fixed notions of succession, it is probable that power would frequently supply the place of right, and the weaker state fall a victim to the ambition of a more warlike neighbour. We are told that the Britons were quarrelsome, rapacious, and revengeful; that every nation was torn by intestine factions; and that pretexts were never wanting to justify oppression, when it could be committed with impunity. It was this rancorous hostility among themselves which accelerated their subjugation to the power of Rome. "There is not," says Tacitus, "a "more fortunate circumstance, than that these powerful "nations make not one common cause. They fight sin- "gle, and unsupported; and each in its turn is com- "pelled to receive the Roman yoke†."

Such were the Britons, who by their bravery and perseverance baffled the attempts of the first, and the most warlike, of the Cæsars. From that period to the reign of Claudius, during the lapse of ninety-seven years, they retained their original independence. During the civil wars, the attention of the Romans was too actively employed at home, to think of foreign conquest. Augustus

* Cæs. v. 11. 20. 22. Diod. Sic. v. p. 347. Mela, iii. p. 264. Tac. Agric. xvi. Dio. Cass. lx. p. 779. Dio, in Sever. p. 339.

† Maxime imperitandi cupidine, et studio prolatandi ea quæ possident. Mela, iii. 265. Tacit. Agric. xii.

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thrice announced his intention of annexing Britain to the empire: but the danger was averted, on one occasion by a submissive embassy from the natives, on the others by the intervention of more important concerns *. Instead of exacting the tribute imposed by Cæsar, he contented himself with levying duties on the trade between Gaul and Britain, a measure which brought a larger sum into the imperial treasury, and was borne without murmuring by the inhabitants †. Yet this financial experiment has been magnified, by the flattery of a courtier, into the conquest of the whole island ‡.

A. D. 21.

Tiberius pretended that the empire was already too extensive; and sought to justify his own indolence by the policy of Augustus §. In opposition to his conduct, his nephew and successor Caligula exhibited to the world a farce, worthy of the childish prince by whom it was planned. Cunobeline, the most powerful of the successors of Cassibelan, had banished his son Adminius. The exile repaired to the emperor, and, as if Britain had been his patrimony, made a surrender of the island into the hands of Caligula. The glorious intelligence was immediately transmitted to the senate: and the army, raised for the war against the Germans, was ordered to assemble on the coast of Gesoriacum ‖. As soon as the emperor arrived, he arrayed the legions on the shore, rowed out to sea in the imperial galley, returned precipitately, and gave the signal of battle. The soldiers, in suspense and astonishment, inquired for the enemy. but Caligula informed them, that they had that day conquered the ocean, and commanded them to collect its spoils, the shells on the beach, as a proof of their victory. To perpetuate the memory of his folly, he laid the foun-

A. D. 40.

* Dio. xlix. p. 472; liii. 586. Hor. l. i. Ode 29, iv. 12.
† Strabo, iv. p. 200.
‡ Præsens divus habebitur Augustus, adjectis Britannis Imperio.—*Hor.* iii. 5.
§ Tac. Agric. xiii.
‖ Boulogne.

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dation of a lofty beacon, and returned to Rome to give himself the honours of a triumph *.

But the empty pageantry of Caligula was soon succeeded by the real horrors of invasion. Instigated by Beric, a British chieftain, whom domestic feuds had expelled from his native country, the emperor Claudius commanded Aulus Plautius to transport four legions with their auxiliaries into Britain. It was with difficulty that the troops could be induced to engage in the expedition: but, as they crossed the channel, a meteor was seen moving in the direction of the fleet, and was hailed as a certain omen of victory. The Britons, under the command of Caractacus and Togidumnus, the two sons of Cunobeline, adopted the policy of their ancestors, and endeavoured to harass, rather than to repel, the invaders. But the German auxiliaries, better fitted for such warfare than the legionary soldiers, followed them across rivers and morasses: and though the natives made a gallant resistance, drove them, with the loss of Togidumnus, to the northern bank of the Thames. The emperor himself now took the command, penetrated to Camalodunum †, and received the submission of the Britons in the vicinity. At his departure, he divided the Roman forces between the legate Plautius, and Vespasian, an officer whose merit afterwards invested him with the purple. To the care of Plautius was assigned the left, to that of Vespasian the right bank of the Thames. Both experienced from the natives the most determined resistance. Vespasian fought no less than thirty battles, before he could subdue the Belgæ and the natives of the Isle of Wight: Plautius, during the five remaining years of his government, was opposed by Caractacus at the head of the Cassii and Silures, who, though frequently beaten, as often renewed the contest. Claudius

A. D. 43.

* Suet. in Calig. 46, 47. Dio, lix. 754. The ruins of Britenhuis on the coast of Holland have been supposed to be the remains of this beacon. Camd. p. liv. Gibson's version. But in all probability it would be raised at Boulogne.

† Malden or Colchester

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had entered Rome in triumph: to Plautius, for his services, was decreed the inferior honour of an ovation *.

A. D. 50. Ostorius Scapula was the successor of Plautius. To repress the inroads of the unsubdued Britons, he erected two chains of forts, one in the north along the river Avon, the other in the west along the left bank of the Severn. The reduced tribes were gradually moulded into the form of a Roman province: and, when the Iceni dared to refuse the yoke, their rebellion was severely punished, and a colony of veterans was planted at Camalodunum to insure their obedience. The freedom of Britain now sought an asylum among the Silures. The enthusiastic attachment of that people to their independence had caused them to be compared to the ancient Sicambri; and their hatred of the Roman name had been envenomed by an incautious expression of Ostorius, that their existence as a people was incompatible with his projects. In Shropshire, at the confluence of the Coln and Teme, stands a lofty hill called Caer-Caradoc, still retaining the vestiges of ancient fortifications. There Caractacus and the Silures determined to defend the liberty of their country. The bank of the river was lined with troops, and the ascent of the hill was fortified with ramparts of loose stones. At the approach of the Romans, the Britons bound themselves by an oath to conquer or die, and defied with loud exclamations the attack of the enemy. Ostorius himself hesitated: but at the demand of the legions the signal of battle was given: the passage of the river was forced: and the Romans, under showers of darts, mounted the hill, burst over the ramparts, and drove the Silures from the summit. The wife and daughter of Caractacus fell into the hands of the victors; his brothers soon after surrendered; and the king himself was delivered in

* Dio, lx. 779—781. Suet. in Claud. xxii. xxiv. Tac. Agric. xiii. The Roman army brought with it several elephants, probably to terrify the natives. Dio, ibid. The exploits of Plautius are mentioned in an inscription in his honour, which is still extant, on the mausoleum of the Plautian family, near Ponte Lucano, on the road from Rome to Tivoli.

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chains to Ostorius by his step-mother Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes, under whose protection he had hoped to elude the vigilance of his pursuers.

The fame of Caractacus had already crossed the seas; and the natives of Italy were anxious to behold the man who had braved for nine years the power of Rome. As he passed through the imperial city, he expressed his surprise that men, who possessed such palaces at home, should deem it worth their while to fight for the wretched hovels of Britain. Claudius and the empress Agrippina were seated on two lofty tribunals, with the pretorian guards on each side, and the senate and people in front, as witnesses of the spectacle. First were borne the arms and the ornaments of the British prince; next followed his wife, daughter, and brothers, bewailing with tears their unhappy fate; lastly came Caractacus himself, neither dispirited by his misfortunes, nor dismayed at this new and imposing scene. Claudius, to his own honour, received him graciously, restored him to liberty, and, if we may credit a plausible conjecture, invested him with princely authority over a portion of conquered Britain *. The event was celebrated at Rome with extraordinary joy. By the senate the captivity of Caractacus was compared to the captivity of Perses and Syphax: by the poets Claudius was said to have united the two worlds, and to have brought the ocean within the limits of the empire †.

The Silures, however, did not abandon themselves to despair. Taught by experience that uninstructed valour was not a match for the discipline and defensive armour of the legions, they adopted a more desultory but san-

* Quædam civitates Cogidubno regi donatæ: (is ad nostram usque memoriam fidissimus mansit.) Tac. Agric. xiv. Though great authorities conceive Cogidubnus to have been the same person as Caractacus, I entertain a suspicion that he was the very Togidumnus whom Dio supposed to have fallen in battle.

† Tacit. Ann. xii. 31—38.

At nunc oceanus geminos interluit orbes:
Pars est imperii: terminus ante fuit.
Ex Catalect. Scalig. apud Camd. lix.

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guinary mode of warfare; and contented themselves with harassing the Romans in their quarters, interrupting their communications, and surprising their detachments. If they sometimes received, they often inflicted, considerable injury: and Ostorius was so exhausted by labour and vexation, that his death was attributed to his
A. D. 53. chagrin. His successor, Aulus Didius, found himself involved in a new war. Venusius, a chieftain of the Jugantes, had married Cartismandua. Both had been faithful allies to the Romans: but the queen, after a short interval, separated from her husband, and took to her bed a Briton, named Vellocatus. Hostilities were the immediate consequence. Cartismandua, for her ancient services, claimed the aid of the Romans: the Brigantes, through hatred of the adulteress, fought for Venusius. After several battles, the queen was compelled to leave the throne to her husband, and to lead a degraded life under the protection of her allies *.

To Didius succeeded Veranius, whose early death made way for Suetonius Paulinus, a general of consummate skill and distinguished reputation. The isle of
A. D. 57. Anglesey, the nursery and principal residence of the druids, had hitherto offered a secure retreat to those priests; to whose influence and invectives was attributed the obstinate resistance of the Britons. To reduce it,
A. D. 61. Suetonius ordered his cavalry to swim across the strait, while the infantry should pass over in boats. On their approach to the sacred isle, they beheld the shore lined not only with warriors, but with bands of male and female druids. The former, with their arms outstretched to heaven, devoted the invaders to the god of war; the latter, in habits of mourning, with their hair floating in the wind, and lighted torches in their hands, ran in all directions along the beach The Romans were seized

* Tac. Ann. xii. 40. Hist. iii. 45. This fact is sufficient to induce a doubt of the accuracy of Cæsar (v. 14), and of Dio Niceus (in Sev. p. 389), who represent a community of wives as a national institution among the Britons. Perhaps the story might have arisen from the circumstance that several families were accustomed to dwell in the same hut.

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with a superstitious horror. For a moment they refused to advance: shame and the reproaches of their leader urged them to the attack. The victory was easy and bloodless. On that day the power of the druids received a shock from which it never recovered. Their altars were overturned; their sacred groves fell beneath the axe of the legionaries; and their priests and priestesses were consumed in the flames which they had kindled for the destruction of their captives *.

But the absence of Suetonius in Anglesey was the signal of a most formidable insurrection. Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, who had long been the faithful ally of Rome, to secure the disposition of his property, had made the emperor joint heir with his own daughters. But Roman avarice was not easily defeated. The whole succession was immediately seized by Catus, the imperial procurator. Boadicea, the widow of the late king, who ventured to remonstrate, was scourged as a slave; and the chastity of her daughters was violated by the Roman officers. The unhappy princess grasped the first opportunity of revenge. The history of her wrongs reminded each individual of his own sufferings; and in a few days almost all the conquered tribes were in arms. To account for this general disaffection we are told, that the insults and oppression of the conquerors were beyond endurance; that the British youth had been forcibly conveyed to foreign countries to serve among the cohorts of auxiliaries; that, to pay the contributions, their chieftains had been compelled to borrow ten millions of drachmas † from the philosopher Seneca, by whom they were harassed with the most vexatious prosecutions; that their estates had been lately registered, and loaded with imposts; and that many of their most noble families had been reduced to indigence and slavery ‡. All these causes contributed to swell the tor-

* Tacit. Ann. xiv. 29, 30. † About 480,000*l.*

‡ Compare Tac. Ann. xiv. 31, with Dio Nicæus apud Xiphil. in Ner. p. 169.

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rent which now burst on the Roman establishments. Camalodunum was the first to experience its fury. Within the walls of the colony had been erected a temple to the divinity of Claudius, the subjugator of Britain, and the natives were eager to demolish this monument of their servitude. At the first assault the town was reduced to ashes: the walls of the temple protracted the fate of the garrison only two days. Petilius marched with the ninth legion to their assistance. It was trodden under foot by the multitude of the insurgents.

By this time Suetonius had returned to London, already a populous and opulent mart *. Unable to protect the town, he retired, taking with him such of the inhabitants as were willing to share his fortunes. London was soon consumed by the flames; and shortly afterwards the municipal town of Verulam experienced the same fate. The fury of the Britons treated as enemies all who had not joined in the insurrection; and those who fell not by the sword, were immolated with still greater cruelty to Andraste, the goddess of victory. The reported slaughter of seventy thousand victims, without distinction of sex or age, of rank or country, attests both the violence of their revenge, and the extent of country through which they followed the Romans †.

Suetonius was at last compelled to turn his face to the enemy. Though fear had prevented the second legion from joining in his retreat, he had collected from the different garrisons ten thousand men, and had chosen a position in which he could be attacked only in front. The Britons were collected in masses around their different chieftains; their wives and children occupied a long line of carriages in the rear; and the air resounded with their cries and imprecations.

* Copiâ negociatorum et commeatuum maxime celebre. Tac. 33.
† Tac. ibid. Dio Nic. ibid. Their rejoicings were celebrated in the woods sacred to Andraste. Some of the victims were crucified, others were burnt. The female captives, after the amputation of their breasts, were hanged or impaled.—Ibid.

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The Romans, motionless and silent, permitted them to approach; and then, rushing forward in the form of a wedge, overturned every thing within their reach. The battle, however, was long and fiercely maintained. Numbers on the part of the natives supplied the want of discipline; and a succession of conflicts almost exhausted the patience of the legionaries. Victorious at last, the Romans took a severe revenge. They granted no quarter: and the women and children were involved in the same carnage with the combatants. Were success to be estimated by the multitude of the slain, Tacitus was justified in comparing this with the most glorious victories of ancient Rome. He estimates the loss of the Britons at eighty thousand men. The fugitives, however, who escaped, offered to try again the fortune of war: but Boadicea, who had led them to the field, and shared the dangers of the day, refused to survive this defeat, and terminated her misfortunes by a voluntary death*. A. D. 62.

If this splendid action preserved the ascendency of the Roman arms, it did not put an end to the war. A notion prevailed in the imperial court, that the obstinacy of the Britons arose from the dread which the severity of Suetonius had inspired. He was recalled; and under the milder administration of his three successors, Turpilianus, Trebellius, and Bolanus, the natives within the Roman pale were gradually inured to the yoke. But the task of tranquillizing the province, the mutinous spirit of the army, and the rival claims of competitors for the empire, prevented these governors from making any attempts against the independent portion of Britain. As soon as Vespasian had assumed the purple, a new era commenced. Petilius Cerealis was ordered to reduce the Brigantes, and in the space of A. D. 70.

* Tac. 34—37. Dio Nic. apud Xiphil. in Ner. p. 176. Dio has described this British heroine as a woman of lofty stature and severe countenance. Her yellow hair reached almost to the ground. She wore a plaited tunic of various colours, round her waist a chain of gold, and over these a long mantle.—p. 173.

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five years that powerful tribe was added to the subjects
A. D. of the empire. Julius Frontinus was his successor;
75. and during the three years of his government he nearly subdued the warlike nation of the Silures*.

A. D. But the reputation of preceding governors was ob-
78. scured by the more splendid and more lasting fame of Cneius Julius Agricola. When that commander arrived, the army had been dismissed into winter quarters. He immediately summoned it again to the field, marched into the territory of the Ordovices, who had surprised a squadron of Roman horse; and put to the sword the greater part of that nation. Preceded by the terror of his name he crossed over to Anglesey: the natives offered no resistance, and the sacred isle was a second time added to the empire. In the two next campaigns he gradually extended the limits of his government to the Tay. Tribe after tribe was compelled to submit; garrisons were stationed in every commanding situation; and with the prospect of success was removed the principal incentive to rebellion. The fourth summer was employed in securing a strong frontier to the Roman conquests; and a line of forts from the Frith of Forth to that of Clyde bade defiance to the inroads of the more northern Britons†.

But Agricola aspired to more solid praise than that of conquest, and devoted his winters to the less ostentatious, but more useful, arts of peace. Sensible of the errors of his predecessors, he reformed the civil administration in all its branches; established a more equitable system of taxation; listened with kindness to the complaints of the natives; and severely punished the tyranny of inferior officers. The Britons were charmed with the mildness and justice of his government, and publicly pronounced him their benefactor. At his instigation the chieftains left their habitations in the

* Tac. Ann. xiv. 37—39. Hist. i. 9. 60; ii. 97. Vit. Agric. 8, 16, 17.

† Agricola seems to have proceeded across the Dee, through Lancashire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Annandale, to the narrow isthmus between the Friths of Forth and Clyde. Gordon's Itiner. Septent.

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forests, and repaired to the vicinity of the Roman stations. There they learned to admire the refinements of civilization, and acquired a taste for improvement. The use of the Roman toga began to supersede that of the British mantle; houses, baths, and temples, were built in the Roman fashion; children were instructed in the Roman language; and with the manners were adopted the vices of the Romans. In these new pursuits the spirit of independence speedily evaporated; and those hardy warriors, who had so long braved the power of the emperors, insensibly dwindled into soft and effeminate provincials *.

Ambition and curiosity now induced Agricola to transgress the boundary which he had fixed to his conquests. An Irish chieftain, expelled from his native country, had sought protection in the camp of the Romans. From him it was understood that the sister island possessed a climate and soil like those of Britain, and was inhabited by tribes of similar manners and similar dispositions. Agricola was not insensible to the glory of adding this unknown country to the provinces of the empire: but prudence forbade him to engage in a second conquest before he had completed the first, and he contented himself with obtaining possession of the western coasts of Britain; that he might be prepared to take advantage of the first opportunity which the course of events might offer.

The next year, having received the submission of the tribes in the neighbourhood of the Forth, he pushed his advances along the eastern shore. The operations of the army on land were combined with those of a numerous fleet at sea. If the sight of the shipping alarmed the natives, the Romans were also terrified by reports of the multitude and ferocity of their enemies. In the darkness of the night the Britons attacked the quarters of the ninth legion, burst into the camp, and maintained a doubtful fight within the intrenchments

* Tac. Agric. 18–24.

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until the break of day disclosed the eagles of the other legions advancing to the support of their comrades This campaign seems to have conferred little honour on the imperial arms.

Resolved to distinguish the eighth and last year of his government, Agricola assembled all his forces, and added to their number several cohorts of Britons raised among the tribes of the south. The Caledonians were apprized of their danger: and thirty thousand warriors under the command of Galgacus undertook to defend the passage of the Grampian mountains. They were discovered, divided into clans, posted one below the other on the declivity of a hill. The plain at its foot was covered with horsemen and armed chariots. Agricola drew up his army in two lines, in the first of which he placed the auxiliaries, in the other the legions. As long as they fought with missile weapons, the Britons, from their numbers, retained the advantage; but their unwieldy and unpointed swords were of little use in close action, and they were gradually driven up the hill by the steady pressure of the auxiliaries *. An attempt to surprise the rear of the Romans was defeated by the vigilance of the general, who charged in return the flank of the Britons, and threw them into disorder. The courage or despair of a few detached bodies protracted the conflict till night. The next morning presented a very different scene. A vast and dreary solitude had succeeded to the noise and turmoil of the preceding day: and columns of smoke rising on the verge of the horizon proved that the Britons had burnt their cottages in their flight. Ten thousand Caledonians, and about four hundred Romans, are said to have fallen in the battle †.

After this victory the army returned to winter quarters: the fleet pursued its voyage, and sailing round the

* They had osier targets covered with skins, and long heavy swords without points, with which they were accustomed to cut, but not to push. Tac. Agric. xxxvi.

† Tac. Agric. 24—38.

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island, arrived at the port of Sandwich, from which it had commenced the expedition By the jealousy of Domitian the ornaments, but not the parade, of a triumph were granted to Agricola, who, having surrendered the command to his successor, Lucullus, returned to Rome, waited on his imperial master, and sunk into the obscurity of private life *.

The Roman power was now firmly established in the island. The tribes which had submitted, made no attempt to recover their independence: and the Caledonians, humbled by their last defeat, were content to roam without molestation in their native forests. The successors of Agricola, instead of conducting the legions in the field, were employed in protecting the public tranquillity, in settling the details of the provincial government, and in assimilating the state of Britain to that of the other countries which had been incorporated in the empire. A short sketch of this system will not be unacceptable to the reader.

1. The governor was denominated the Prefect or Propretor of Britain. His power was supreme within the island, but precarious in its duration, and dependent on the will of the emperor. He united in his own person every species of authority which was exercised by the different magistrates within the city of Rome. He commanded the army; he was invested with the administration of justice; and he possessed the power of substituting his own notions of equity in the place of the strict letter of the law. An authority so extensive and irresistible would frequently give birth to acts of injustice; and though the imperial court and the senate-house were open to the complaints of the natives, yet the distance of the capital, and the influence of friends, promised, or rather insured, impunity to the oppressor. In a few years, however, the exorbitant power of the prefects was confined by the emperor Hadrian, who, in his "perpetual edict," laid down a system

* Tac. Agric 40.

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of rules for the regulation of their conduct, and established a uniform administration of justice through all the provinces of the empire *

2. Subordinate to the prefect, but appointed by the emperor, was the procurator or quæstor. It was his duty to collect the taxes, and to administer the revenue of the province. That revenue arose from a variety of imposts; a poll-tax, which was not confined to the living, but extended to the funerals of the dead; a tax on legacies, the sale of slaves, and purchases at auctions; the tenth part of the produce of mines; and a certain proportion of corn, hay, and cattle, which was paid either in kind or in money, at the option of the procurator †. He was also employed occasionally in the dishonourable office of a spy: and his reports were frequently swelled with exaggerated accounts of the riches, the power, and the ambition of the prefect. For the distance of that officer from the seat of government, and the natural strength of the island, were constant sources of suspicion to the emperors; and in the course of this history we shall see that suspicion justified by the conduct of the usurpers, who, at the head of the British legions, will assume the purple, and contend for the empire of Rome.

3. The amount of the army maintained in Britain must have varied according to circumstances. When Plautius undertook the reduction of the island, he was at the head of four legions with their auxiliaries, a force which, at a moderate calculation, would exceed fifty thousand men ‡. If the different military stations,

* Tillem. Emp. ii. 51.

† In provinces which submitted voluntarily, a tenth of the corn was exacted (frumentum decumanum): in those which were conquered, an arbitrary quantity (frumentum stipendiarium). Besides this the natives supplied the corn wanted for the army at a fixed price (frumentum emptum); and a certain quantity for the use of the governor, for which a composition was usually paid in money (frumentum æstimatum). See Murphy's Tacitus, from l.a Bleterie, vol. iv. p. 402.

‡ At that period a legion consisted of 6100 infantry, 726 cavalry, and nearly the same number of auxiliaries (Veget. ii. 6. Tac. Ann. iv. 5). Under the successors of Constantine the number of the legions had increased from twenty-five to one hundred and thirty-two: but their bulk had dwindled from nearly 7000 to 1200 men (Pancir. ad Notit. Imp. f. 23.)

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which were so thickly scattered over the country, had all been garrisoned at the same time, they would have required a still greater number*: but it is probable that, in proportion as the Roman power was established, many of them were abandoned; and we know that, during the decline of the empire, the army under the three military commanders in Britain did not exceed 22,000 men. Into the ranks of the *legions* none but Roman citizens could claim the privilege of admittance: but the *auxiliaries* were composed of provincials who had not obtained the freedom of the city, or of barbarians, whom the fate of war, or the prospect of wealth, had drawn into the imperial service. These auxiliaries nearly equalled the legionaries in number: and from the notices of ancient writers, and the inscriptions on ancient monuments, have been discovered the names of three-and-thirty cohorts of auxiliary foot, and of eleven squadrons of auxiliary horse, which were stationed in Britain†. All these were composed of foreigners; for though by the law of conscription the natives were compelled to serve, they were not permitted to remain in the island. At home they might have employed their swords in asserting the independence of their country: but on the continent they were unconnected with the inhabitants: for their subsistence, they depended on the bounty of the emperor; and far from combining to subvert, were always prepared to support, the throne of their benefactor. What their number might be, is uncertain: but there exists evidence to show, that they amounted to at least six-and-twe ty cohorts; that they were dispersed as far as Egypt and Armenia; and that some of them had acquired the surname of "Invincible," from their valour‡.

When the Roman conquests in Britain had reached their utmost extent, they were irregularly divided into

* There were in all one hundred and sixty-six stations, besides several smaller forts. Ric. Coriu. i. p. 17. 33. Whi aker's Manches. iii. 2. xi. 2.

† It is not, however, improbable that the same cohort or squadron may be sometimes designated under two different names.

‡ Apud Camd. introd. p. cvij.

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six provinces under the government of pretors appointed by the prefect. The long tract of land which runs from the western extremity of Cornwall to the South Foreland in Kent, is almost separated from the rest of the island by the arm of the sea, now called the Bristol Channel, and by the course of the river Thames. This formed the most wealthy of the British provinces; and from priority of conquest or proximity of situation was distinguished by the name of Britannia prima. Britannia secunda comprised the present principality of Wales with the addition of that tract which is included by the Severn in its circuitous course towards St. George's Channel. Flavia Cæsariensis was the next in order, but the first in extent. It was bounded on two sides by the former provinces, and on the two others by the Humber, the Don, and the German ocean. To the north of the Humber lay the province of Maxima. It reached to the Eden and Tyne, and its opposite shores were washed by the western and eastern seas. Valentia followed, including the Scottish lowlands as far as the friths of Clyde and Forth. The tribes beyond the friths formed the sixth government of Vespasiana, divided from the independent Caledonians by the long chain of mountains, which rising near Dunbarton, crosses the two counties of Athol and Badenoch, and stretches beyond the frith of Murray. But the greater part of this province was wrested at so early a period from the dominion of Rome, that it is seldom mentioned by writers, and the pretentura of Agricola has been generally considered as the northern limit of the empire in Britain *. To each of these divisions was allotted a separate government under the general superintendence of the prefect: but the interests of the rulers were most jealously separated from

* Ric. Corin. i. p. 15. Not. Imp. occid. f. 155. The capitals of these provinces were Richborough, Caerleon, London, York, Whithern, and Inverness. The existence of the last province of Vespasiana has been questioned: but the authority of Richard is corroborated by the testimony of Ptolemy, who mentions the military station of Pterotone or Inverness. Ptol. viii. 2. apud Gale. Whit. Manch. i. 8. iii. 2. xi. 2.

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those of the provincials. Every Briton by his birth was excluded from all offices of trust and authority in his own country; and every holder of such office was prohibited by law from marrying a native, or purchasing property within the island *.

Throughout these provinces was scattered a great number of inhabited towns and military posts, the names of which are still preserved in the itineraries of Richard and Antoninus. They were partly of British and partly of Roman origin; and were divided into four classes, gradually descending in the scale of privilege and importance. 1. The first rank was claimed by the colonies. It had long been the policy of Rome to reward her veterans with a portion of the lands of the conquered nations; and for this purpose those situations were generally selected, which combined the double advantage of a fruitful soil, and a military position. Each colony was a miniature representation of the parent city. It adopted the same customs, was governed by the same laws, and with similar titles conferred on its magistrates a similar authority. In Britain there were nine of these establishments, two of a civil, seven of a military description †. In the constitution of the latter, we discover a striking similitude to the feudal tenures of later ages. The veteran received his land from the bounty of the emperor; and was obliged to enrol his sons in the army, as soon as they should attain the years of manhood. Disgrace, imprisonment, or sometimes death, was the punishment of the youth who refused to serve the benefactor of his father and family. 2. The advantages enjoyed by the colonies were nearly equalled, in some respects surpassed, by the privileges of the municipal cities; the inhabitants of which were exempted from the operation of the imperial statutes, and with the title of Roman citizens, possessed the

* See the Pandects, xxiii. tit. ii. n. 38. 57. 63. Cod. Theod. viii. tit. xv. leg. 1.

† Richborough, London, Colchester, Bath, Gloucester, Caerleon, Chester Lincoln, and Chesterfield. Ric. Corin. i. p. 36.

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right of choosing their own decuriones or magistrates, and of enacting their own laws. Privileges so valuable were reserved for the reward of extraordinary merit, and Britain could boast of only two municipia, Verulam and York*. But the jus Latii, or Latian right, as it conferred more partial advantages, was bestowed with greater liberality. Ten of the British towns had obtained it from the favour of different emperors, and were indulged with the choice of their own magistrates, who, at the expiration of the year, resigned their offices, and claimed the freedom of Rome†. That freedom was the great object of provincial ambition; and by the expedient of annual elections, it was successively conferred on almost all the members of each Latin corporation. 4. The remaining towns were stipendiary, compelled, as the term imports, to pay tribute, and governed by Roman officers, who received their appointment from the pretor. These distinctions were, however, gradually abolished. Antoninus granted to every provincial of rank and opulence the freedom of the city: Caracalla extended the indulgence to the whole body of the natives‡.

Though Agricola had defeated, he had not been able to subdue, the Caledonians. After his departure they continued to insult the Roman power; frequently crossed the line of forts between the two friths; and by their successful example, rekindled the flame of independence in the breasts of many among their countrymen. In less than thirty years the state of Britain had become so precarious, as to require the presence of the emperor
A D. Hadrian. Of his exploits history is silent; but on the
120. testimony of medals and inscriptions, we may believe that he expelled the barbarians, and recovered the pro-

* Ric. Corin. i. p. 36.

† Inverness, Perth, Dunbarton, Carlisle, Catterick, Blackrode, Cirencester, Salisbury, Caister in Lincolnshire, and Slack in Longwood. Ric. ibid.

‡ Tillem. Emp. ii. 103. Hence he is thus addressed by Rutullus:
Urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat.—*Rutil. Itin.* v. 66

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vinces which had been lost*. If, however, his victories have been forgotten, his memory has been preserved by a military work, which was executed under his direction, and has hitherto defied the ravages of time. Convinced by experience that the pretentura thrown up by Agricola could not confine the northern tribes, he resolved to oppose a second barrier to their incursions, by drawing a ditch and rampart across the island, from the Solway frith on the western, to the mouth of the Tyne on the eastern coast. This mighty fortification measured in length more than sixty of our miles; and strong bodies of troops were permanently stationed at short intervals on the whole extent of the line†.

But the tranquillity which had been established by A. D. Hadrian, was repeatedly disturbed during the reign of 146. his successor, Antoninus. On the north of the vallum the six tribes of the Maætæ reasserted their independence; on the south the Brigantes took up arms, and invaded the territory of the Ordovices. Lollius Urbicus was appointed propretor of Britain. He chastised the Brigantes, subdued the Maætæ, and, in imitation of Hadrian, carried a similar fortification across the Isthmus, from Caer-riden on the Forth to Alcluid on the Clyde, a distance of more than thirty-six miles. In honour of the emperor, it was called the vallum of Antoninus; and from numerous inscriptions which have been preserved, we learn the names of the different

* See Speed, 96. Camd. introd. lxxix.

† Spartian. in Hadrian. p. 290. The vallum may be traced from Burgh on the sands to the town of Newcastle, avoiding the mountains, and winding along the valleys The ditch appears to have been eleven feet in breadth, and nine in depth: the rampart, at the present day, rises in some parts six feet above the original surface. Besides this, two aggeres or mounds of earth, one on the north, the other on the south, run the whole length in lines parallel to the ditch, at the distance of nearly twenty feet. It is probable, that the mound to the south was a military road; and that the original work of Hadrian, like that of Antoninus between the Friths, consisted of no more than the ditch the rampart, and the road. The agger on the north might be afterwards added as a military way for the wall of Severus, when the vallum could be no longer considered as a work of defence.

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corps by which it was raised, and the different portions of work which were respectively allotted to each *.

A.D. 180. Hostilities were now become habitual between the Caledonians and the Romans. Urged by national animosity and the love of plunder, these intractable barbarians annually assaulted the vallum of Antoninus; often eluded the vigilance, or overpowered the opposition, of the guards; and spread devastation over the province. But in the reign of Commodus their incursions assumed a more formidable appearance; and the discontent of the legions alarmed the emperor for the safety of Britain. Ulpius Marcellus, a soldier of approved valour and unsullied integrity, was made propretor. He restored the discipline of the army, and drove the Caledonians back to their native mountains. But his services were requited with ingratitude. By his severity he incurred the hatred of a seditious soldiery; while his glory excited the jealousy of a dissolute prince. From the swords of the former he escaped with difficulty; Commodus recalled him from his command, and reluctantly abstained from depriving him of life †.

But the British legions soon made a trial of the resolution, or the weakness, of the emperor. They sent a deputation of fifteen hundred men to demand the head of the minister Perennis. Without opposition these dangerous petitioners marched through Gaul and Italy, and were met at the gates of Rome by Commodus himself. To that prince, immersed in pleasure, and reckless of blood, the life of a favourite was a trivial object. He surrendered Perennis to their revenge; the unhappy victim was scourged and beheaded; and his wife and daughters were immolated on his remains ‡.

A.D. 190-197. The government of Britain was next conferred on Clodius Albinus. His birth and abilities awakened the

* Pausan. in Arcad. l. viii. p. 698. Capitol. in Anton. p. 297 Horsley, Brit. Rom. p. 160. Henry ii. App. ix. 476.
† Dio apud Xiphil. in Commodo, p. 286, 287.
‡ Ibid. p. 287. Lamprid. in Com. p. 311. Zonar. p. 209.

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jealousy of his imperial master, who, either with the view of securing his fidelity, or, as is more probable, of trying his ambition, offered him the rank and authority of Cæsar. Albinus had the prudence to decline the insidious present: but after the death of Commodus, and the ephemeral reigns of Pertinax and Julian, he willingly accepted the same dignity from the emperor Severus. It soon, however, appeared, that with all the parade of friendship, Severus was a secret and mortal enemy; and Albinus, by the advice of his friends, assumed the imperial purple, and led the British legions into Gaul. The two armies, amounting to one hundred thousand men, fought in the plain of Trevoux, near Lyons. At first the cause of Albinus was seen to triumph. Severus disappeared from the field: but he soon returned with a fresh body of men, renewed the battle, and obtained the victory. The British Cæsar paid with his head the forfeit of his ambition *.

Severus was now undisputed master of the empire. A. D. 198.
To abolish the exorbitant power of the prefect of Britain, he divided the island into two governments, bestowing the one on Heraclianus, and the other on Virius Lupus†. The latter with an army of new levies was unable to withstand the united efforts of the Maætæ and Caledonians, and was compelled to purchase with money a precarious respite from their incursions. The expedient, though it procured a temporary forbearance, invited them to a repetition of the attempt; and Lupus, wearied with continued hostilities, solicited the presence of the emperor, and the aid of a numerous army ‡.

Though Severus was advanced in years, and declining A. D. 207-211.
in health, he cheerfully obeyed the summons of his lieutenant. He was accompanied by his two sons, Caracalla and Geta: to the younger he committed the civil

* Herodian, iii. 16—23. Dio apud Xiphil. in Sever. p. 322—324.
† Εἰς δυο ηγεμονιας. Herod. iii. 24. Spartan. in Sever. p. 320. Inscriptions in Speed, p. 139, by mistake for 111.
‡ Herod. iii. 46.

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government of the province; to Caracalla he assigned a part in the projected expedition. When the army moved from York, the selection of the commanders, the number of the legions and auxiliary cohorts, and the long train of carriages loaden with provisions and implements of war, proclaimed the determination of the emperor to subdue, if not to exterminate, all the rebellious tribes in the north. The Britons were but ill provided against so formidable an invasion. They possessed no other defensive armour than a narrow target. Their weapons were a dirk, an unwieldy sword hanging from the waist by an iron chain, and a short lance, from one extremity of which was suspended a bell. But they were aided by the nature of the country, abounding in mountains, lakes, and forests; by constitutions inured to fatigue, hunger, and every privation; by habits of running, swimming, and wading through rivers and morasses; and above all, by a contempt of danger, and an unconquerable love of freedom. The progress of the Romans was constantly interrupted by the necessity of opening roads through the woods, of throwing bridges over the rivers, and of erecting causeways across the marshes. It was in vain that Severus sought for an enemy in front. The natives had wisely divided themselves into detachments, which hung on the flanks of the Romans, watched every advantage, and often inflicted a sudden and severe wound on the long and encumbered line of their enemies. Still the emperor, regardless of his losses, and unappalled by difficulties, pressed forward till he reached the Frith of Cromarty, where he condescended to accept the offers of submission which he had formerly refused; and, that he might appear to punish the obstinacy of the natives, exacted the nominal surrender of a part of their territory. But this trivial advantage had been dearly purchased; and the number of the Romans, who perished by fatigue, by disease, and by the sword, has been estimated at fifty thousand.*

* Dio apud Xiphil. in Severo, p. 340. Herod. iii. 46—49.

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When Severus returned to York, he had leisure to devise means for the future security of the southern provinces. From what he had seen, he was convinced that no rampart of turf could resist the assaults of these active and persevering barbarians; and he determined to confine their incursions by raising a solid wall of stone a few paces to the north of the vallum of Hadrian. In the neighbourhood of the sea it preserved a parallel direction: but as it approached the higher ground, leaving the work of that emperor to wind its circuitous course along the valleys, it boldly ascended the most lofty eminences, and ran along the margin of the most abrupt precipices. Its height was twelve feet*; its breadth at the foundation varied from two to three yards. In front was sunk a ditch of the same dimensions with that of Hadrian: and for its protection were assigned four squadrons and fourteen cohorts, composing an army of ten thousand men, quartered in eighteen stations along the line of the wall. By the historian of Severus, this stupendous erection is pronounced the principal glory of his reign: by the traveller of the present day its remains are viewed with feelings of astonishment and delight†.

Scarcely had the Romans evacuated the territory of the Caledonians and Maætæ, when information was brought to Severus, that the barbarians had recommenced hostilities. His infirmities had been so much increased by the fatigue of the late campaign, that he was no longer able to join the army. He gave the command to Caracalla, with an injunction to extirpate the whole race without mercy. But that prince had a far different object in view—to exclude his brother Geta from the succession. Instead of marching against the Britons, he endeavoured to gain the affection of the troops, by indulgence and donatives; and, as soon as his

* Bede, Hist. i. 12.
† Notit. imp. Pancirol. f. 176, 177. Maximum decus. Spart. in Severo, 321.

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father had expired at York, renewed the peace, disbanded the army, and returned to Rome *.

A. D. 211-284. History is little more than a record of the miseries inflicted on the many by the passions of a few. If then, for more than seventy years from the death of Severus, Britain has escaped the notice of the ancient annalists, we may infer that they were years of comparative tranquillity and happiness. The northern tribes respected the strength of the new fortification, and the valour of the army by which it was guarded: and the natives of the south, habituated from their infancy to submission, bore without impatience the yoke, which had pressed so heavily on their free-born fathers. The rest of the empire was convulsed by the claims of the numerous competitors, known by the name of the thirty tyrants; and from coins, which have been occasionally discovered in the island, it is supposed that Posthumus, Lollianus, Victorinus, Tetricus, Bonosus, and Ælianus were successively acknowledged in Britain. If the inference be accurate, the silence of history shows, that their authority was admitted without opposition, and not established at the point of the sword, as it was in the other provinces. Probably Britain constantly followed the fortune of Gaul.

A. D. 284. This distracted state of the empire had opened new prospects to the barbarians who, under the appellations of Franks and Saxons, possessed the coast from the mouth of the Rhine to the extremity of the Cimbrican Chersonesus. They swept into their own ports the commerce of the narrow seas, and insulted by their predatory expeditions the shores of Gaul and Britain. To chastise or restrain their insolence, the command of a powerful fleet, with the title of Count of the Saxon shore, was given by the emperors Diocletian and Maximian to Carausius, an experienced officer, and a Menapian by birth. His conduct soon awakened suspicion

* Dio. p. 342. Herod. ibid.

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The pirates continued their depredations with impunity; a portion of their spoil was regularly surrendered to Carausius; and the money was employed in debauching the loyalty of the mariners. Maximian prepared to punish his perfidy. But the Menapian unexpectedly fortified Boulogne, concluded an alliance with the barbarians, sailed to Britain, induced the army and fleet to espouse his cause, and assuming with the imperial purple the name of Augustus, set at defiance the whole power of Rome.

The reign of this adventurer was fortunate and glorious. The Caledonians were compelled to flee before his arms; his authority was acknowledged on the western coast of Gaul; and a numerous fleet carried the terror of his name to the entrance of the Mediterranean. It was not, however, to be expected, that the emperors would tamely acquiesce in his usurpation. At first indeed they thought it more prudent to admit him as their colleague: but, when they had adopted the two Cæsars Galerius and Constantius, they assigned to the latter the task of wresting Britain from his dominion. Constantius began the attempt with the siege of Boulogne. By his orders the mouth of the harbour was obstructed by a mound of stones; and the garrison, cut off from any assistance from Britain, was, after an obstinate resistance, compelled to surrender This loss might grieve, but did not dishearten Carausius. He was still master of the sea, and at the head of a numerous army. But, while he was employed in providing against a distant danger, he fell a victim to domestic treachery; and in the eighth year of his reign was murdered at York by Allectus, a minister who had abused his confidence, and dreaded his resentment. A. D. 293. A. D. 297

Allectus enjoyed during three years the reward of his treachery. The time was spent by Constantius in preparing a fleet which might safely transport his troops to the island. To distract the attention of the enemy, it was divided into two squadrons, of which one

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under his own command was stationed at Boulogne, the other, under that of the prefect Asclepiodotus, in the mouth of the Seine. The latter, owing to the impatience of the mariners, was the first which put to sea; and sailing under the cover of a fog, passed unobserved by the British fleet near the Isle of Wight, and reached without opposition the adjacent coast. The Cæsar himself with a still more powerful armament directed his course to the shore of Kent; and at his landing received the pleasing intelligence that Allectus was dead. On the first news of the arrival of Asclepiodotus, the usurper had hastened towards the spot: but the greater part of his forces was unable to equal his speed; and with his guard, a band of Franks, he was speedily overA. D. whelmed by the Romans. Nor was this the only in-
297 stance of the good fortune of the Cæsar. A division of his fleet, which had separated in the dark, entered the Thames, and advanced without meeting an enemy to the neighbourhood of London. At that moment a body of auxiliaries in the pay of Allectus, hearing of his death, began to plunder the city. It was saved from destruction by the accidental arrival of the Romans; and Constantius himself was soon afterwards hailed by the inhabitants as their sovereign and deliverer. He immediately restored the imperial authority: Britain became his favourite residence; and the natives enjoyed the benefit of a mild and equitable administration, till their happiness was disturbed by religious persecution *.

At the distance of so many ages it is impossible to discover, by whom Christianity was first preached in the island. Some writers have ascribed that province to St. Peter; others have preferred the rival claim of St. Paul: but both opinions, improbable as they are in themselves, rest on the most slender evidence; on testimonies, which are many of them irrelevant, all ambiguous and unsatisfactory. It is however certain that

* Panegr. vet. p. 177, 180. Eutrop. ix. p. 653. Aurel. Vict. in Constan.

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at a very early period there were Christians in Britain: nor is it difficult to account for the circumstance, from the intercourse which had long subsisted between the island and Rome. Within a very few years from the ascension of Christ, the church of Rome had attained great celebrity: soon afterwards it attracted the notice and was honoured with the enmity of Claudius and Nero *. Of the Romans whom at that period choice or necessity conducted to Britain, and of the Britons who were induced to visit Rome, some would of course become acquainted with the professors of the gospel, and yield to the exertions of their zeal. Both Pomponia Græcina, the wife of the proconsul Plautius, the first who made any permanent conquest in the island, and Claudia, a British lady, who had married the senator Pudens, are, on rather probable grounds, believed to have been Christians †. But whether it was owing to the piety of these, or of other individuals ‡, that the doctrine of Christianity was first introduced among the Britons, it appears to have made proselytes, and to have proceeded with a silent but steady pace towards the extremity of the island. The attention of the Roman officers was absorbed in the civil and military duties of their stations: and while the blood of the Christians flowed in the other provinces of the empire, the Britons were suffered to practise the new religion without molestation. There is even evidence that the knowledge of the gospel was not confined to the subjects of Rome. Before the close of the second century, it had penetrated among the independent tribes of the north §.

* Epist. to Romans, i. 8. Suet. in Claud. xxv. Tac. Ann. xv. 44.

† For Pomponia, see Tacitus, Ann. xiii. 32; for Claudia compare St. Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 21, with Martial, epig. ii. 54. iv. 13.

‡ Nothing can be less probable in itself, nor less supported by ancient testimony, than the opinion that Britain was converted by oriental missionaries. The only foundation on which it rests, is, that in the seventh century the Britons did not keep Easter on the same day as the church of Rome. That, however, they did so in the beginning of the fourth century, is plain from Eusebius (Vit. Con. iii. 19), Socrates (Hist. v. 22), and the council of Arles (Spelman, p. 40, 42).

§ Britanniarum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita. Tertul. adver. Jud. c. vii. p. 189. Ed. Rigalt.

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It might have been expected that the British writers would have preserved the memory of an event so important in their eyes as the conversion of their fathers. But their traditions have been so embellished or disfigured by fiction, that without collateral evidence, it is hardly possible to distinguish in them what is real from that which is imaginary. After deducting from the account of Nennius and his brethren every improbable circumstance, we may believe that the authority conferred by the emperor Claudius on Cogidunus, was continued in his family; that Lucius (Lever maur, or the great light), one of his near descendants, was a believer in the gospel; that he sent to Rome Fagan and Dervan to be more perfectly instructed in the Christian faith; and that these envoys, having received ordination from Pope Eleutherius, at their return, under the influence of their patron, increased the number of the proselytes by their preaching, and established the British, after the model of the continental churches.* But independently of such authority, we have undoubted proof that the believers were numerous, and that a regular hierarchy had been instituted, before the close of the third century. For by contemporary writers the church of Britain is always put on an equality with the churches of Spain and Gaul; and in one of the most early of the western councils, that of Arles in 314, we meet with the names of three British bishops, Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelphius of Lincoln.†

A. D. 303. 305. It has been observed that the British Christians had hitherto escaped the persecutions to which their continental brethren were repeatedly exposed. But in the beginning of the fourth century, Dioclesian and Maximian

* The substance of this account is confirmed by Beda, who twice in his History, and once in his Chronicle, tells us that Lucius, a British prince, sent messengers to Rome to Pope Eleutherius for instruction in the Christian faith. He places this message in the short interval between the death of the Emperor Commodus (Chron. Op. Min. 173) and that of the Emperor Aurelius (Hist., i. c. 4); that is, between the years 169 and 180. It is difficult to reconcile this date with that which he assigns to the accession of Aurelius, namely, 156. But that number is evidently an error, arising perhaps from the negligence of some copyist, who wrote clvi. for clxi., the correct date.

† Spelm. conc. 42, 45. Labbe. Conc. i. 1430. Eusebius, v. 23. Socrates, v. 21. Col. Lond. should be Col. Lind. Lindum or Lindicolinum, Lincoln.

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determined to avenge the disasters of the empire on the professors of the gospel; and edicts were published, by which the churches in every province were ordered to be demolished, and the refusal to worship the gods of paganism was made a crime punishable with death. Though Constantius might condemn, he dared not forbid the execution of the imperial mandate: but he was careful at the same time to show by his conduct his own opinion of religious persecution. Assembling around him the Christian officers of his household, he communicated to them the will of the emperors, and added, that they must determine to resign their employments, or to abjure the worship of Christ. If some among them preferred their interest to their religion, they received the reward which their perfidy deserved. The Cæsar dismissed them from his service, observing that he would never trust the fidelity of men, who had proved themselves traitors to their God*. But the moderation of Constantius did not restrain the zeal of the inferior magistrates. The churches in almost every district were levelled with the ground: and of the Christians many fled for safety to the forests and mountains, many suffered with constancy both torture and death. Gildas has preserved the names of Julius and Aaron, citizens of Caerleon upon Usk; and the memory of Alban, the protomartyr of Britain, was long celebrated both in his own country and among the neighbouring nations. But within less than two years Diocletian and Maximian resigned the purple; Constantius and Galerius assumed the title of emperors; and freedom of religious worship was restored to the Christian inhabitants of the island.†

Constantius, while he was yet in an inferior situation, had married Helena, a native of Bithynia according to some writers, the daughter of a British prince, if we may believe our national historians. When he was raised to the dignity of Cæsar, he was compelled to repudiate Helena for Theodora, the daughter-in-law of A. D 306.

* Euseb. Vit. Cons. i. 16. Sozom. i. 6. Lact. de mortib. persec. 15, 16.
† Gild. vii. viii. Bed. i. vii.

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Maximian; but Helena had already borne him a son in Britain *, the celebrated Constantine, on whom posterity has bestowed the epithet of the "great." The young prince was educated an honourable hostage in the court, first of Dioclesian, and then of Galerius: but on the report that his father's health was rapidly declining, he snatched a favourable moment to escape, and maiming at every post the horses which were not necessary for his flight, contrived to retard the speed of his pursuers. He reached York a few days before Constantius expired; was recommended by him to the affection of the soldiery; and assumed, with their approbation, the titles of Cæsar and Augustus. The sequel of his story, and the long course of victories by which he united the whole empire under his own authority, are subjects foreign from these sheets: but it will be necessary to notice an important alteration which he made in the government of Britain †.

Dioclesian had divided the whole empire into four parts, under himself, Maximian, and the two Cæsars. When Constantine became sole emperor, he adopted a similar partition under four pretorian prefects. At the same time new titles and employments were devised; and throughout the whole gradation of office, the military was jealously separated from the civil administration. By this arrangement Britain was placed under the jurisdiction of the prefect of the Gauls, whose authority extended from the wall of Antoninus to the southern limits of Mauritania Tingitana. His deputy with the title of vicar of Britain resided at York: while the subordinate charge of the provinces was entrusted to the two consulars of Valentia and Maxima, and the three presidents of Flavia, Britannia prima, and Britannia secunda. The administration of justice, and of the finances, was continued in the hands of these ministers: but the command of the army was divided

* Tu nobiles *illic oriendo* fecisti. Paneg. veter p. 199 Item. p. 207.
† Zosim. ii. 78, 79. Philostorg. i. p. 477.

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among three military officers, who acknowledged for their superior the master of the cavalry or infantry stationed on the banks of the Rhine. They were distinguished by the titles of the duke of Britain, whose command reached from the northern boundary to the Humber; the count of the Saxon shore, whose duty it was to guard the coast, from the Humber to the Land's End in Cornwall; and the count of Britain, to whom were subject all the other garrisons in the island *.

Under Constantine and his sons Britain enjoyed more than fifty years of tranquillity. The aggressions of the barbarians were repressed; and industry and commerce were encouraged. The first check was given to the public prosperity by the cruelty and avarice of Paulus, a Spanish notary. He had been sent to the island with a commission from the emperor Constantius to inquire into the conduct of the officers, who, during the general defection of the western armies, had adhered to the usurper Magnentius. Paulus was eminently skilled in all the arts of rapacity and chicanery; with him wealth was a sufficient presumption of guilt; and no man, whose possessions might fill the coffers of the notary and his imperial master, was ever acquitted at his tribunal. Martin, the vicar of Britain, had lamented, and sometimes interposed to prevent, these iniquitous proceedings. But he was informed that a deep scheme had been laid to involve him in the common delinquency; and, impelled by despair, he made an attempt on the life of the notary. The stroke was parried: and Martin instantly plunged his sword into his own heart. His real or pretended accomplices were punished with torture and confiscation, exile or death; and Paulus continued his career regardless of the hatred and imprecations of the natives. By Constantius he was applauded for his fidelity: Julian, the succeeding emperor, commanded him to be burnt alive †.

* Zosim. ii. 109, 110. Tillem. iv. 117. Not. Imp. f. 155. 161. 162. 176 177.

† Amm. Marcel. xiv. 12. xx. 9.

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While Julian held with the title of Cæsar the prefecture of Gaul, an event occurred which proves the great resources of Britain at this period. The Franks, Saxons, and Alemanni had previously crossed to the left bank of the Rhine, laid waste an extensive tract of country, reduced to ashes forty towns, and carried the inhabitants into captivity. By repeated victories the Cæsar compelled the barbarians to restore their prisoners: his next object was to provide the multitude with food, in a country which for years had been desolate. The granaries of Britain offered an immediate and plentiful supply. A fleet of eight hundred small vessels was collected in the mouths of the Rhine; repeated voyages were made to the British coasts: the cargoes were conveyed in lighters up the river; and the almost famished inhabitants received an ample provision of corn both to sow their lands, and to support themselves till the following harvest *. Nor was the island equal only to a temporary supply. It exported annually great quantities of corn to the continent †.

It is remarkable that from this period, the Caledonians and Maætæ, tribes which for two centuries had been the terror of the civilized Britons, disappeared without any ostensible cause from the page of history: and their places are supplied by the Picts and Scots, who though differing from them in name, are described as barbarians equally savage in disposition and equally addicted to invasion and rapine ‡. Of the origin of these two nations, which appear to start suddenly into existence in the course of the fourth century, many learned but fanciful theories have been invented. 1. To me it seems manifest that the Picts were, under a new denomination, the very same people, whom we have hitherto called Maætæ and Caledonians §. The name

* Zosim. iii. 145. † Amm. Marcel. xviii. 2. p. 204. Edit. Gronov. Liban. orat. x. tom. ii. p. 281. ‡ See Gild. c. 25.

§ This appears, 1. Because we have no evidence of the extirpation or emigration of the ancient tribes: 2. Because the character of the Picts is the same as that given of the Caledonians by Herodian, Dio, and Solinus.

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of Caledonians properly belonged to the natives of that long but narrow strip of land, which stretches from Loch Finn on the western, to the Frith of Tayne on the eastern coast: but it had been extended by the Romans to all the kindred and independent clans which lay between them and the northern extremity of the island. In the fourth century the mistake was discovered and rectified: and from that time not only the Caledonians, but their southern neighbours, the five tribes of the Maætæ, began to be known by the generic appellation of Piots, a word derived perhaps from the national custom of painting the body*, more probably from the name which they bore in their own language. 2. The Scots came undoubtedly from Ireland, which, like its sister island, appears to have been colonized by adventurers from different countries. Thus we meet with tribes of Damnii, Volantii, Brigantes, and Cangii, names which point out a British origin; of Menapii and Cauci, descended from the parent tribes in Belgium and Germany, and of Iberni and Concani, who seem to have emigrated from Spain†. These were scattered on different points of the coast; while the interior was held

They lived by rapine: they went almost naked (Gild. 15): they punctured the figures of animals on their bodies (Claud. de bello Get. 165): 3. Because Eumenius, the first who mentions them, numbers the Caledonians with the *other* Picts (Eum. paneg. Constan. p. 235): 4. Because Ammianus Marcellinus (lib. xxvii. p. 520), about eighty years after Eumenius, divides the Picts into the Dicaledones, confessedly the Caledonians, and the Vecturiones, who dwelt in the vicinity of the river Tay (Ptol. viii. 3. Ric. Cor. i. 6). The territory of the Picts extended from the northern ocean as far as the south of Galloway. (Bed. iii, 4.)

* Nec falso nomine Pictos
Edomuit.—*Claud. in* iii. *consul. Honor.* 54.

† Ptol. viii. 2. Ric. Corin. i. 8. Dionysius places a Spanish colony also in the Scilly islands.

Τοὶ κασσιτερὸν γενέθλην,
Ἀφνειὰ ναίουσιν ἀγακλυτὰ παίδες Ἰβήρων.
Dion. Periorg. v. 563.

As the Roman arms never penetrated into Ireland, the ancients may have entertained very false notions of its inhabitants. By Diodorus (v. 355), Strabo (iv. 201), Mela (iii. 266), and Solinus (xxii. 42), they are described as cannibals, and the most barbarous of the human race. But from Tacitus we learn that the ports of Ireland were frequented by merchants, and that in manners and disposition the natives resembled the Britons. (Vit. Agric. xxiv.)

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by numerous clans of the Scoti *, many of whom, in the fourth century, united with the Attacotti, a kindred clan in the neighbourhood of Loch Lomond, to plunder the rich provinces of the Roman Britons. But the Scots soon aspired to something more permanent than plunder. From the north of Ireland the passage was short and inviting: hordes of adventurers followed each other; settlements were obtained from the friendship, or extorted from the weakness, of the Picts; and at last the strangers acquired so marked a superiority over the indigenous tribes, as to impart the name of Scotland to the northern division of Britain †. It was long, however, before the two nations were blended in one people. We find the Picts distinguished from the Scots as late as the twelfth century ‡.

A. D. 360. In the reign of Constantius the Picts and Scots entered the Roman province in considerable numbers. The Cæsar Julian could not be spared from Gaul: and Lupicinus, whom he sent as his deputy, did not venture to meet the invaders. This confession of weakness incited them to repeat their inroads; and at each repetition they penetrated farther into the country.

* In the fourth century, they were universally known by the name of Scots (Scotiæ gentes. Porphyr. apud S. Hieron. ad Ctesiph. iv. 481.) Thus Claudian, speaking of their depredations, says:

Me juvit Stilicho, totam cum *Scotus Iernen*
Movit, et infesto spumavit remige Tethys.
De Laud. Stil. ii. v. 249.

Scotorum cumulos flevit glacialis *Iverne*.
In consul. iv. *Honor.* v. 33.

The island itself was called Scotia. Scotia eadem et Hibernia—cujus partes priores Iberiam intendunt, unde et Ibernia dicta: Scotia autem, quod ab Scotorum gentibus colitur, appellata. Isid. Orig. xiv. 128. See also Orosius (i. 2.), Æthicus (Cosmog. 507), Ravennas Geographus (Gale, i. 748), and Bede (Hæc autem propriè patria Scotorum est. Hist. i. 1.) It is not improbable that the Scoti were the most numerous tribe in the interior of the island, and a division of the great Celtic family of the Cotti. The language of the Waldenses, the natives of the valleys amid the *Cottian* Alps, bears to this day a great affinity to the vernacular tongues of Ireland and Scotland. See Chamberlayne's Oratio Domin. and Pinkerton's Dissert. p. 84.

† Loarn, Fergus, and Angus, the sons of Erc, a chieftain of Dalraida, in Ulster, settled in the isthmus of Cantire in 503. From them the Scottish kings claimed their descent. See Dr. O'Conor, Proleg. i. 126. ii. 83.

‡ Ric. Hagul. 291. 316.

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They maintained spies in the Roman army; they tempted the fidelity of the garrisons; and they seduced many of the foreign auxiliaries to join them in the pursuit of plunder. At length the emperor Valentinian was alarmed for the safety of the island. Fallofaudes, the Roman general, had been slain by treachery; Nectarides, the count of the Saxon shore, had fallen in battle; and the flames of devastation spread along the right bank of the Thames. First the steward of the imperial household, then Jovinus, and lastly Theodosius, were appointed to the command. That celebrated officer, with the flower of the Gallic army, landed at Richborough, and, having divided his troops into several corps, attacked and defeated the marauding parties of the barbarians. He entered London in triumph, A. D. and spent a few weeks in making preparations for new 367. victories. The deserters were induced by an act of amnesty to rejoin their standards; the ancient discipline of the army was revived; supplies and reinforcements were provided; and, on the recommencement of hostilities, the invaders were taught in several bloody encounters to respect the bravery of the troops, and the talents of the general. They sullenly retired beyond the ancient limits of the empire; and Theodosius applied himself to re-establish the former system of government. The political and financial departments he confided to the vicar Civilis: and, as commander of the army, repaired the fortifications, placed garrisons in the military stations, and restored the province of Valentia, which had long been abandoned. When he left the island, his services were attested by the gratitude of the natives, who accompanied him in crowds to the seashore; and by the acknowledgment of his sovereign, who loaded him with distinguished honours*.

Gratian succeeded his father Valentinian in the

* Amm. Mar. xxvii. c. 8. xxviii. c. 3. Claud. in iv. Hon. v. 26. Theodosius ab Augusta profectus, quam veteres appellavere Lundinium. Amm. Mar. ibid

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A. D. 375. A. D. 379. empire, and invested with the purple Theodosius the younger, the son of the deliverer of Britain. There was at the time in the island an officer, named Maximus, of great abilities, and of greater ambition*. Inflamed with jealousy by the promotion of one who had been his equal, he began to intrigue with the soldiery; and artfully extorted from their gratitude or their credulity an offer of the title of Augustus. It was not without apparent reluctance that he yielded to their entreaties: but his subsequent conduct betrayed his real sentiments. Not content with the possession of Britain, he aspired to the whole of the western empire. At the head of the British army he sailed to the mouth of the Rhine; the murder of Gratian gave him possession of Gaul; and, by the precipitate flight of Valentinian, the greater part of Italy was compelled to submit to his authority. He reigned with dignity, and severely chastised the Picts and Scots, who attempted to renew their inroads. Theodosius received his image, and acknowledged his title; but roused at last by shame and apprehension, took the field against the usurper. On the banks of the Save in Pannonia, the first shock was given to the power of Maximus; and the city of Aquileia soon afterwards saw him stripped of the imperial ornaments, and beA. D. 388. headed by order of his victorious opponent. The Britons, who had followed his standard, never revisited their country: and the native writers lament the defenceless state in which it was left by their absence, exposed to the insults of its inveterate enemies†.

This favourable opportunity did not escape the vigilance of the Picts and Scots. They experienced only a feeble resistance from the small force that remained in the island, and returned home laden with the plunder of the provinces. Their repeated inroads impelled the

* Maximus is called a Spaniard by Zosimus (iv. 247), a Briton by Socrates (v. 11) and Gildas (c. x.), the Robber of Richborough by Ausonius (Latro Rhutupinus. De clar. Urb. vii. p. 1301. apud Poet. vet.)

† Prosper. in Chron. an. 387. Sozom. Hist. vii. p. 721. Gild. c. 11. Nenn. xxiii.

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Britons to lay their distressed situation before the imperial court, probably through the means of Chrysantus the vicar, whose administration is mentioned with applause: and Stilicho, the master of the infantry and cavalry, despatched to their assistance a body of troops, which repelled the invaders, and confined them within their own territories *.

But the great fabric of the Roman power was now shaken to its foundation. Hordes of barbarians, under different denominations, issuing from the unknown regions of the east and the north, had depopulated the fairest of the provinces; and a torrent of Goths, Vandals, and Alans, under the celebrated Alaric, had poured from the summit of the Julian Alps into the flourishing plains of Italy. It became necessary to recall the troops from the extremities to defend the heart of the empire; and the cohorts which had been stationed along the walls in Britain, fought and triumphed under the command of Stilicho in the bloody battle of Pollentia †. After A. D. 403. the retreat of Alaric, the British forces seem to have returned to the island, and to have driven back the Picts, who had taken advantage of their absence to plunder the neighbouring province. But within two or three years the German nations bursting into Gaul, spread devastation from one extremity to the other; and the legions in Britain, cut off from all communication with the emperor Honorius, determined to elect an emperor for themselves. The purple was bestowed A. D. 406 on Marcus, one of their officers, who soon lost his life in a sedition of the soldiery. The next object of their choice was Gratian, a native of one of the British municipia, who, at the end of four months, experienced the fate of his predecessor. This dangerous pre-eminence was, however, still an object of competition. Constantine, a soldier in the ranks, with no other pretensions than his name, offered himself to their suffrages.

* Compare Gildas (c. 12) and Bede (i. 12) with Claudian de laud. Stilic. ii. ver. 247.

† Claudian De bello Get. v. 416.

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He was proclaimed Augustus, led them to Boulogne, and with the assistance of some Roman corps, which lay dispersed in the neighbourhood, cleared the province of the barbarians. His son Constans, who is said to have worn the monastic habit at Winchester, was named Cæsar and hastened to take possession of Spain. But their prosperity was of very short duration. The son was put to death at Vienne by Gerontius, one of his own
A. D. officers; and the father was beheaded at Arles by the
411. order of Constantius, who commanded the forces of Honorius *.

While Constantine was thus hastening to his ruin, Britain had been the theatre of an important revolution. The natives, left without a military force, and exposed to the inroads of their enemies, determined to reject an authority which was unable to afford them protection. They deposed the Roman magistrates, proclaimed their own independence, took up arms, and with the spirit of freemen, drove the barbarians out of their territories †. When the intelligence reached Ravenna, Honorius, the legitimate emperor, wrote to the states of Britain, "to "provide for their own defence." By this ambiguous expression he has been thought to have released them from their allegiance: perhaps his only object was to authorize their present efforts, that he might thus reserve a claim to their future obedience ‡.

It would be interesting to delineate the conduct of the natives on this memorable occasion, and accurately to exhibit the causes which transferred the greater part of this island from the milder dominion of the Romans to the exterminating sword of the Saxons. But Britain, after its separation from the empire, ceased to attract the notice of foreign historians; and our national writers lived at so distant a period, and have interwoven so much fable in their narratives, that they possess but little claim to our confidence. From Zosimus we learn, that,

* Zosim. vi. p. 371—375. † Id. 376. ‡ Id. 381.

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on the extinction of the imperial authority in the island, the British states established domestic governments according to circumstances. These states were undoubtedly the different cities, which have been previously enumerated, and to which Honorius had directed his letters. As the colonies, municipia, and Latin towns, had always formed so many separate commonwealths under the superintendence of the provincial presidents, they would probably wish to retain the forms of government to which they had so long been habituated. It is, however, easy to conceive, that during the anarchy that must have been produced by the sudden removal of the Roman magistrates, and the confusion occasioned by the repeated incursions of the Picts and Scots, many a fortunate leader would abuse his own power and the confidence of his fellow-citizens to usurp the sovereign authority. In a few years every trace of popular government had vanished: and all the provinces which had belonged to the empire were divided among a multitude of petty chieftains, principally of British, but partly of Roman origin. They were dignified with the title of kings, though the dominions of many were confined within narrower limits than most of our present counties. and their ambition, their wars, and their vices, inflicted on the country more permanent and extensive injuries than had ever been suffered from the incursions of foreign enemies *.

Soon after the Britons became independent, the greater part of Europe was depopulated by the two dreadful scourges of pestilence and famine. This island did not escape the general calamity: and the Scots and Picts seized the favourable moment for the renewal of their inroads. The dissensions of the native chieftains facilitated their attempts; district after district became the scene of devastation; till the approach of danger admonished the more southern Britons to provide for

* Gild. c. xix. xxiii. xxv. Epist. p. 10. 12. Nen. c. lxi. Procop. Hist. Vand. l. i. p. 8, 9.

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their own safety. Some solicited, but in vain, the protection of Ætius, the Roman general in Gaul*: others, under the guidance of Vortigern, the most powerful of the British kings, had recourse to an expedient, which, however promising it might appear in the outset, proved in the result most fatal to the liberty of their country. The emperors had long been accustomed to purchase the services of the barbarians; and the Armoricans, who, like the Britons, had thrown off the Roman yoke, had, with the assistance of the Saxons, successfully maintained their independence†. Vortigern resolved to pursue the same policy. A Saxon squadron of three chiules, or long ships, was cruising in the Channel in quest of adventures; and its two commanders, the brothers Hengist and Horsa, eagerly accepted the overtures of the British prince, to aid in fighting his battles, and to depend for their reward on his gratitude. They
A.D. 449. landed at Ebbsfleet, and were cantoned in the isle of Thanet‡.

Amidst these calamities, the Britons found leisure to attend to theological disputes. About the commencement of the fifth century Pelagius a Briton, and Celestius a Scot, had advanced several new and heterodox opinions respecting the nature of original sin and divine grace. Agricola, one of their disciples, made an attempt to diffuse the new doctrine among their countrymen; and the British prelates, unaccustomed to the subtleties of controversy, solicited the assistance of their neighbours, the bishops of Gaul. With the concurrence of Pope Celestine, Germanus of Auxerre twice visited Britain, once in 429 in company with Lupus of Troyes, and again in 446 with Severus of Treves. By his authority the doctrines of Pelagius were condemned and suppressed, and schools for the education of the clergy were opened in several dioceses. On one occasion the Gallic prelate resumed a character, in which he had distinguished

* Gild. c. xvi. xvii. xxi. † Sid. Apol. Paneg. Avit. v. 369.
‡ Gild. c. xxiii. Nen. xxviii.

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himself during his youth. A party of Picts and Saxons were plundering the coast. Germanus put himself at the head of the Britons, and led them to a defile, where they awaited in ambush the approach of the invaders. On a sudden, by his command, they raised a general shout of Hallelujah: the cry was reverberated from the surrounding hills; the enemy fled in amazement, and numbers perished in an adjoining river. By our ancient writers this action was celebrated under the name of the Hallelujah victory *.

* Prosp. in Chron. p. 630. ad. ann. 429. Constan. vit. S. Ger. c. 1. 28. Bed. i. 17. Hunt. 178.

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CHAPTER II.

ANGLO-SAXONS.

Origin and character of the Anglo-Saxons—Their repeated descents in Britain—They found eight distinct kingdoms—The natives retire to the western coast—Reigns of the Saxon Bretwaldas—Ælla—Ceawlin—Ethelbert—Redwald—Edwin—Oswald—Oswio.

About the middle of the second century the Saxons, an obscure tribe of barbarians, occupied the district between the Elbe and the Eyder, on the neck of the Cimbrican Chersonesus*: in the course of two hundred years the same appellation had become common to all the nations from the extremity of the peninsula to the Weser, the Ems, and the Rhine†. They formed a kind of voluntary association, which was loosely held together by similar interests and congenial pursuits. Pillage by land, piracy by sea, were their only profession: and though the imperial fleet had often been employed to check, it could never subdue their dauntless and enterprising spirit. But as the power of Rome declined, the audacity of the Saxons increased: their expeditions became more frequent, their descents more destructive; from plunder they proceeded to colonization; and the men who had depopulated, afterwards repeopled the better portion of Britain. Adventurers from each of the associated tribes were among the colonists; but the majority consisted of Jutes, Angles, and Saxons properly so called‡. The original seat of the Saxons has already been mentioned: the Angles were their neighbours on the north as far as the site of the present town of Flensburgh; and beyond the Angles dwelt the

* Ptol. in 4° Europæ tab.
† Eutrop. ix. p. 659.
‡ Bed. l. 15. Ethelwerd, Chron. p. 476.

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nation of the Jutes, with no other boundary than the ocean *.

From the language of the Saxons, their lofty stature, and national institutions, it is evident that they were of Gothic descent. Their whole time was alternately devoted to indolence and to rapine. To earn by labour what might be acquired by force, they deemed unworthy the spirit of a freeman, and consigned the culture of their lands with the care of their flocks to the meaner labour of women and slaves. Every warrior attached himself to the fortunes of some favourite chieftain, whom he followed in his piratical expeditions. These chieftains guided the councils of the tribe; and from them, in times of danger, was selected a leader, who exercised the supreme command, and was dignified with the title of Cyning or king. His authority, however, was but temporary. It expired with the exigency to which it owed its existence †.

The warlike exertions of these tribes were at first checked by their want of arms: but during three centuries of intercourse or hostility with the Romans, they had learned to supply the deficiency. They bore a target on the left arm, and employed for offence the spear, the sword, and the battle-axe. The two latter were long and ponderous; and to their destructive effects is attributed the havoc which the Saxons never failed to make in the broken ranks of an enemy ‡. As their ships were not fitted for the transportation of cavalry, they usually fought on foot in one compact body; but after their settlement in Britain, the chieftains, with the most wealthy of their retainers, came mounted into the field. Their esteem for the war-horse rose to a species of veneration; but previously to his initiation, his nostrils

* Bede mentions also the Frisians, Boructuari or people of Berg, the Rugini, Danai, and Hunni. v. 9. Alfred, in his Orosius, distinguishes Angle-land, Sealand, and Denmark: but afterwards observes that Jutland, Sealand, and the other islands were originally inhabited by the Angles. "On thæm landum eardedon Engle ær hi hider on land comen." Harrington's Orosius, p. 20.

† Bed. v 10. Wittich. i. p. 7. ‡ Huntingd. 178. 181.

were slit, his ears were stitched up, and his sense of hearing was entirely destroyed. From that moment he became sacred to the God of war, and was conceived on important occasions to announce the will of the deity *.

In the infancy of their naval power the Saxon boats resembled those of the other northern tribes; and a few planks, surmounted with works of osier, and covered with skins, bore the fearless barbarian across the ocean, in the search of spoil and adventures †. But in the fifth century their chiules or war-ships had assumed a more formidable appearance ‡: and from the number of warriors whom they carried, and the length of the voyages which they made, we may conclude that they were formed of more solid and lasting materials. In these the Saxons repeatedly issued from their ports, sometimes steering for a particular point, sometimes trusting entirely to the guidance of the winds: but whether they were conducted by chance or design, their object was invariably the same,—to surprise and pillage the unoffending inhabitants on some part of the British or Gallic coasts. Sidonius, the eloquent bishop of Clermont, has described in animated language the terrors of the provincials and the ravages of the barbarians.—"We have "not," he says, "a more cruel and more dangerous "enemy than the Saxons. They overcome all who have "the courage to oppose them. They surprise all who "are so imprudent as not to be prepared for their at-"tack. When they pursue, they infallibly overtake: "when they are pursued, their escape is certain. They "despise danger: they are inured to shipwreck: they "are eager to purchase booty with the peril of their "lives. Tempests, which to others are so dreadful, to "them are subjects of joy. The storm is their protec-

* Wilk. Con. i. 150.

† —— Cui pelle salum sulcare Britannum
Ludus, et assuto glaucum mare findere lembo.—*Apol. Pan. Avit.* v. 370.

‡ The word is still employed on the rivers Tyne and Were. By ancient writers it is translated a long or a large ship. See Bede, l. 15. Alfred's Version, ibid. Chron Sax. 12. Gildas, c. xxiii.

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"tion when they are pressed by the enemy, and a cover "for their operations when they meditate an attack. "Before they quit their own shores, they devote to the "altars of their gods the tenth part of the principal "captives: and when they are on the point of returning, "the lots are cast with an affectation of equity, and the "impious vow is fulfilled *." The character which is thus given of them by Sidonius, is confirmed by every ancient authority. Marcellinus has recorded the terror excited by their sudden and unexpected aggressions. Zosimus allots to them the superiority in courage, strength of body, and patience of fatigue; and by the emperor Julian they are pronounced the most formidable of all the nations that dwelt beyond the Rhine, on the shores of the western ocean †.

Such was the terror of the Saxon name, when Hengist and Horsa, in 449, were invited by Vortigern to fight his battles. For six years they served him with fidelity. The Picts were taught to respect, the Britons were eager to reward, their valour. Hengist, whether he had already formed designs of conquest, or was desirous of rendering greater service to his employers, obtained permission to solicit reinforcements from his own country. The messengers, whom he sent, were received with welcome: chieftain after chieftain led his followers to Thanet; and the isle was crowded with strangers, till their number became an object of jealous apprehension to the Britons. An increased supply of provisions was demanded; and the refusal was to both parties the signal for war. The Saxons marched to the Medway, and at Aylesford were opposed by the natives. The passage of the river was fiercely disputed; Vorti- A. D. 455.

* Sidon. viii. 6.

† Saxones præ cæteris hostibus timentur. Amm. Mar. xxviii. p. 526. Καρτερωτατοι θυμῳ και ῥωμῃ και καρτερια τῃ περι τας μαχας. Zos. iii. p. 147. Των υπερ την Ρηνον και την ιστριαν θαλαττην ἐθνων τα μαχιμωτατα. Jul. orat. i. in laud. Const. p. 34. Angli homines omnium quos novimus barbarorum ad bella acerrimi. Procop. Hist. Got. iv. p. 469. Gentem virtute atque agilitate terribilem. Oros. vii. p. 549.

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gern lost a son, and Hengist his brother. but the issue appears to have been favourable to the strangers. After the death of Horsa, Oisc, the son of Hengist, was associated with his father in the command, and a second battle was fought more to the west, on the banks of the Cray. It proved most disastrous to the Britons. Four of their leaders were left on the field; their troops fled with precipitation to London: and Kent was abandoned to the possession of the invaders. It was at this time that Hengist ventured, if ever he ventured, beyond the limits of that county. We are told by Gildas that the Saxons traversed the island without opposition, that they spread on every side the flames of devastation: but that on their return the natives collected in considerable numbers, and inflicted a signal vengeance on the plunderers. Some such event may perhaps have happened: but the Saxon writers are silent, and the hyperbolical declamation of Gildas must not be literally received. Eight years later was fought a most bloody battle, in which twelve of the British chieftains were slain; and the Saxons lost a renowned leader called Wypped, from whom the spot was named Wyppedsfleet. The last victory of Hengist was obtained in 473. The Britons are said to have fled from their enemies as "from a devouring conflagration," and to have left behind them spoils of incalculable value. The conqueror survived fifteen years, and dying in 488, left the peaceable possession of Kent to his son Oisc, from whom his successors were called Oiscingas*.

A very different tale is told by the British writers, whose vanity has attributed the loss of Kent to the infatuation of Vortigern, and the treacherous policy of Hengist. That chieftain, if we may credit their relation, had a daughter, Rowena, of transcendent beauty. It was so contrived, that at a banquet given to the British nobles, she waited on Vortigern, who was captivated by

* Chron. Sax. 13, 14. Bed. i. 15; fi. 5.

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her charms, took her to his bed, and bestowed on his father-in-law the kingdom of Kent. But his attachment to the Saxons deprived him of the affections of the Britons. His son Vortemir was placed on the throne, fought three battles with the strangers, and ultimately expelled them from Kent. During five years Hengist wandered an adventurer on the ocean: but at the death of Vortemir the father recovered his crown, and the son-in-law demanded the restoration of the possessions which he had lost. Three hundred deputies from each nation assembled in council to determine the question: but during the conference each Saxon singled out his victim: at the proper moment Hengist exclaimed, "Nemeth yure seax, Draw your daggers:" and the ground was covered with the dead bodies of two hundred and ninety-nine Britons. The one, who had been spared, was Vortigern himself: and to free from captivity a prince whom they hated, the natives yielded to Hengist the territory which has since been divided into the counties of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Middlesex. Can it be necessary to say that many of these pretended events are contradicted by undeniable evidence, and that all escaped the notice of Gildas, a British, and almost a contemporary, writer? The whole appears to be a fable invented by the natives, to account for the first settlement of the Saxons without the admission of conquest*.

Hengist and his successors were content with the possession of Kent. On the north, east, and south, their small domain was protected by the Thames and the sea; on the west they were removed from the hostility of the natives by the interposition of a new band of

* Nen. c. 36. 44—47. I should not have noticed these fictions had it not been thought that the account of Hengist's expulsion is favoured by a passage in Gildas (aliquanto cum recessissent *domum*, c. 25): but it is evident that by *domum* he means their settlement in Kent, as he adds that the Britons attacked and defeated them *there*. Perhaps he may allude to the battle of Wyppedsfleet. There is a place of that name in the isle of Thanet: but it is very uncertain that it was the scene of combat.

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adventurers, under the command of Ælla and his three sons. In 477, these marauders landed at Cymensore, near Withering, in the isle of Selsey. The Britons made an obstinate resistance: but were defeated with considerable loss, and compelled to shelter themselves in the Andredswold, a forest of one hundred and twenty miles in length and thirty in breadth. The progress of Ælla was slow. In 485 he fought a great battle, the result of which is unknown: and it was not till 490 that he could penetrate as far as the city of Anderid, which gave its name to the tract, and was deemed an impregnable fortress. Its fate is celebrated in our annals. While the Saxons besieged the city, they were besieged in their turn by a numerous army of Britons, who allowed them no rest either by day or night. As often as they began the assault, the natives attacked them in the rear: and if they turned on the assailants, these immediately found an asylum in the woods; from which they issued again, the moment that the Saxons moved to their former position. This harassing species of warfare suggested to the barbarian the obvious expedient of dividing his force into two armies: of which one conducted the siege, while the other watched the motions of the enemy without the walls. At last the Saxons forced their way into the place; Anderid was reduced
A. D. to ashes; and every inhabitant was put to the sword *.
489. This conquest secured to Ælla the possession of his former acquisitions, and he became the founder of the kingdom of Sussex.

Five years after the destruction of Anderid, a more powerful armament of five chiules appeared in the Channel. This was under the command of Cerdic, who, sailing past the previous conquests of his countrymen, landed more to the west, at a place which, from the circumstance, received the name of Cerdicsore †. Natan-

* Chron. Sax. 14, 15. Hunt. 179. Sussex was computed to contain 7000 hides of land. Bed. iv. 13.

† Higden tells us that this "shore of Cerdic" is Yarmouth (Gale, p. 224). He probably means Yarmouth in the Isle of Wight.

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leod, the king of the district, opposed the foreigners with intrepidity and perseverance; and Cerdic was repeatedly compelled to solicit the co-operation of other adventurers. In 501, Porta, with two chiules, arrived at Portsmouth, and slew a British prince who opposed his landing. Still Natanleod retarded the advance of the invaders; and in 508 he routed Cerdic, but was attacked during the pursuit by Cynric, and perished in the field with five thousand Britons. Even this important victory did not give to the Saxon quiet possession of the country. In 514 he received a great accession of strength by the arrival of his nephews Stuffa and Whitgar with three chiules at Cerdicsore: repeated victories gradually extended the conquests of the strangers; and in 519 the great battle of Charford on the Avon finally established the kingdom of Wessex, or of the West-Saxons. Cerdic, having associated his son Cynric in the regal dignity, and bestowed upon his nephews the subordinate sovereignty of the isle of Wight, died in 534*. His was the kingdom of the West Saxons.

The success of these adventurers had given a new direction to the policy of the Saxons. Their object, which had formerly been plunder, was now converted into that of colonization. In pursuit of new settlements in a more opulent country and under a more genial sun, the most enterprising chieftains abandoned their homes, and were followed by numbers anxious to share their fortunes. There was no part of the eastern shore, from the frith of Forth to the mouth of the Thames, which was not visited by hordes of barbarians. While Cerdic was struggling with the southern Britons, several independent chieftains had pushed their conquests along the left bank of the Thames: and in 527 Erkenwin had assumed the sovereignty of Essex, or of the East-Saxons†. The enterprising spirit of the Angles had led them to desert entirely their native country.‡ Se-

* Chron. Sax. 15—19. Hunt. 179. Whitgar and Stuffa put to the sword every Briton in the island. Asser, p. 5.
† Mat. West. ad an. 586.
‡ Bed. i. 15. Chron. Sax. 12.

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veral divisions landed to the north of the East-Saxons: Uffa, from whom his successors were called Uffingas, was chosen for their monarch: and so great was their power, that even while they were making conquests on the Britons, they could furnish men for a foreign expedition.* We are told by Procopius, a contemporary writer, that the daughter of one of their chiefs had been betrothed to Radigis, prince of the Varni, a people on the north bank of the Rhine. But on the death of his father, Radigis married his step-mother, the daughter of Theodobert the Frank, and the East-Angles resolved to revenge the insult. An expedition sailed up the Rhine: the Varni were defeated; and the country was pillaged. When the victors returned to the disappointed princess, whom they had left with a sufficient guard, she loaded them with reproaches for having permitted the escape of Radigis. They returned to the pursuit; discovered the fugitive in a wood, and laid him in chains at her feet. His punishment was probably less severe than the reader will have anticipated. He was compelled to dismiss the daughter of Theodobert, and to take the East-Anglian lady to his bed. The story may be substantially true, but it has undoubtedly been embellished with fiction.†

But the majority of the Angles had spread themselves more to the northward. Ida, who commanded a fleet of forty chiules, after many severe conflicts, succeeded in removing the Bernician Britons from the vicinity of the coast; and fixed his residence at Bebbanburgh, a castle which he had built on a lofty promontory, and to which he had given that name in honour of his consort Bebba§. He obtained the regal title in 547, and reigned twelve years. His states, from their British name Bryneich, were called the kingdom of Bernicia, and were bounded on the south by the river Tyne or the Tees.

The Britons who lived on the right bank of those rivers

* Hunting. 312. Bed. ii. 15. † Procop. Hist. Goth. iv. 468.
‡ Chron. Sax. p. 19. Bed. iii. 6. Nen. 63, 64.

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were called Deiri, from Deyfyr. The first of the Anglian chieftains, by whom they had been assailed and defeated, was Seomil. Ælla, one of his descendants, in 560, obtained the undisputed possession of the country, and formed a new kingdom, which preserved its British appellation *.

The Angles of Deira stretched themselves as far as the Humber. In 586, a colony under the command of Creoda passed that river, and after clearing the coast of the Britons, pushed their conquest behind the East-Angles, till they had reached the very centre of the island. They were in general called Mercians, perhaps from the marshy district in which they first settled; but some of them took the name of Middle-Angles from their central position †.

From the arrival of Hengist to the last successes of Creoda, a period had intervened of more than one hundred and fifty years. The natives had gradually retired before their enemies from the coast to the mountains, and had left about one half of the southern division of the island in the possession of the invaders. Eight new kingdoms had been formed. Kent and Sussex were comprised within the small extent of the counties still known by those names. The East Saxons possessed Essex, Middlesex, and the south of Hertfordshire. East Anglia comprehended Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, and the isle of Ely. These states were prevented from extending their territories by their position on the coast, and the contiguity of other Saxon adventurers. But the remaining kingdoms bordered on the Britons, and were successively augmented by conquest. When they had attained their full growth, Bernicia on the north, and Deira on the south of the Tees, extended from the Forth to the Humber, and from the eastern sea to the western. Wessex

* Nen. 64. When Bernicia was afterwards united with Deira under one sovereign, the whole was called the kingdom of Northumbria, from its comprizing the Saxon conquests north of the Humber.

† Mercia was divided by the river Trent into north and south. North Mercia was computed to contain 7000, South Mercia 5000 hides or lands of families. Bed. iii. 24.

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was bounded by the Thames and the Severn on the north, and stretched from the borders of Kent and Sussex to the Land's End in Cornwall. Mercia comprized all the interior of the island as far as the mountains of Wales. It is easy to point out the continental origin of these different peoples. The nations of the Saxons discover themselves by their very name. The conquerors of Kent, of the Isle of Wight, and the coast of Hampshire opposite to that island, were Jutes. All the remaining kingdoms were founded by the Angles *.

During this long and eventful period, the Britons, though finally unsuccessful, had displayed a considerable share of courage and resolution. In the other provinces of the empire the natives had remained tame spectators of the contest between the imperial forces and the barbarians; and, whenever the fortune of war declared in favour of the latter, had patiently submitted to the rule of the conquerors. The Britons alone, with the exception of the natives of Armorica, had ventured to unsheath the sword in the defence of their liberty. If during the struggle they lost the fairer portion of the island, the origin of their misfortunes will be found in the want of union among their chieftains. Like their fathers of old, they were vanquished in detail. Their national writers talk of kings who at this period wielded the whole power of Britain: but of the existence of any such authority no trace can be discovered in genuine history. The population of the country was divided among a multitude of chieftains, whose crimes and dissensions had rendered them too attentive to objects of personal jealousy or aggrandizement, to act with any combined effort against the common enemy. The chief opposition made to the

* But whatever names these several tribes gave to themselves separately, collectively as a people they were called Angles both by themselves and by the nations on the continent. That they were so called by themselves, is plain from innumerable passages in the works of Beda, and of St. Boniface: and that they were so called by foreigners appears from the correspondence of Pope Gregory with individuals in Gaul, and Greece, and Sicily, both before and after the mission of St. Augustine; in which correspondence he continually terms these Germanic tribes, the nation of the English — gentem Anglorum. Still the natives of Britain and Ireland, whose ancestors had known the first marauders by the name of Saxons, continued to give that appellation to all the subsequent invaders.

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Saxons seems to have proceeded from the inhabitants of the places in which they successively landed: and so unconscious were the other tribes of the danger which threatened them, or so indifferent to the fate of their more distant countrymen, that about the year 470, at the very time when the barbarians were establishing kingdoms in the south-west of the island, an army of twelve thousand Britons, under the command of Riothamus, fought against the Visigoths in the neighbourhood of Bourges.*

Of the chieftains, who signalized their valour against the Saxons, we possess only an imperfect catalogue. 1. The first is Aurelius Ambrosius, who is described as of Roman origin; the son of parents that had worn the purple; a brave, faithful, and unassuming warrior. He seems to have fought against Hengist, and to have perished in a domestic quarrel with Guitolin †. 2. The fame of Natanleod has been preserved by the Saxon Chronicle. He was the opponent of Cerdic, and falling in battle, left his name to a considerable district in Hampshire ‡. 3. The territory of Urien, and the scene of his prowess, lay in the north. Ida and his Angles experienced in Urien a formidable antagonist: but the Briton, after a long, and in some instances successful, struggle, was deprived of life by the jealousy of a confederate chieftain, named Morcant §. 4. The fame of Arthur has eclipsed that of all his contemporaries. Yet if we divest his memory of that fictitious glory, which has been thrown round it by the imagination of the bards and minstrels, he will sink into equal obscurity with his fellows. We know neither the period when he lived, nor the district over which he reigned. He is said to have fought and to have gained twelve battles. In most of these, from the names of the places, he seems to have been opposed to the Angles in Lincolnshire, from the last, at Mount Badon, to the Saxons under Cerdic or

* Jornand. cxlv. p. 678. Sid. Apol. iii. ep. 9. But might not Riotham and his followers be Armorican Britons? The authorities call them Britons, but do not state that they came from the island of Britain.

† Gild. c. 25. ‡ Chron. Sax. p. 17. § Nen. c. 64.

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Cynric.* This, whether it were fought under Arthur or not, was a splendid and useful victory, which for forty years checked the advance of the strangers.† Perhaps, when the reader has been told that Arthur was a British chieftain, that he fought many battles, that he was murdered by his nephew, and was buried at Glastonbury, where his remains were discovered in the reign of Henry II., he will have learned all that can be ascertained at the present day, respecting that celebrated warrior.‡

By the conquests of the Saxons the island was replunged into that state of barbarism from which it had been extricated by the Romans. The victors had long been inured to pillage and slaughter. On many occasions the towns and villages were with their inhabitants involved in the same ruin. A mighty conflagration, says Gildas, was lighted up by the barbarians on the eastern coast, which gradually devoured the whole surface of the island §. To escape from the exterminating sword of their enemies, the natives, as soon as opposition appeared fruitless, fled with their most valuable effects to the hills and forests. Multitudes found a secure asylum among the mountains which cover the west of the island: where, struggling with poverty, and engaged in constant warfare, they rapidly lost the faint polish of provincial civilization, and relapsed into many of the habits of savage life. Others under the conduct of their prelates and chieftains abandoned their native country altogether. Crossing the ocean, they seized the desolate lands on the western extremity of Armorica; subdued the independence of the neighboring cities; and gave to the tract which they subdued the appellation of their parent country. It is still known by the name of Bretagne.‖

But the work of devastation was checked by views of personal interest. The habitations of the Britons were

* Id. c. 61, 62, cum not. Gale, p. 131. † Gild. c. 26. ‡ Girald. apud Langhorn, p. 91. Lel. Coll. v. 8, 9. § Gild. c. 24. Chron. Sax. p. 15. Ethelward i. f. 475. Asserp. 5.

‖ Gild. c. 25, and the testimonies in Usher, Antiq. p. 225—227. Also Bouquet's Rerum Gallic. tom. v. p. 149, vii. 296, and in tom. vi. Eginhard, Annal. ad an. 786, and Ernold. Nigel. de reb. Ludov. l. iii.

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wanted for the use of the conquerors; and the labours of the captives were found necessary for the cultivation of the soil. Hence it was that, as the Saxons extended their conquests, the buildings were suffered to stand; and the lives of the Britons who fell into their hands were spared, unless the thirst of vengeance had been excited by the obstinacy of their resistance. The captives were divided, together with the land, among the conquerors: they became the property, the chattels, of their lord, subject to his caprice and transferable at his will. The same fate attended their descendants for many generations: and from the authentic record of Doomsday it appears, that as late as the eleventh century a great part of the population of England remained in a state of slavery *.

The conquerors had established eight independent kingdoms in the island, though from the frequent union of Bernicia and Deira under the same head, they have generally been considered as only seven. The history of their different dynasties, were they to be arranged either collaterally or in succession, would perplex and fatigue both the writer and the reader. A sufficiently accurate notion of the period which precedes the preponderance of the West-Saxon kings, may be obtained by attending to the reigns of the more powerful monarchs. For there frequently was one among the number, whose authority was acknowledged by all or by most of his contemporaries. The title by which he was designated was that of Bretwalda, the wielder or sovereign of Britain. Whether he obtained it by the influence of his power, or received it from the spontaneous suffrage of his equals, is doubtful; nor do we know whether any

* But after the adventurers had formed and fixed permanent settlements, they gradually abandoned their former exterminating policy, and suffered the natives to retain their national institutions, and their own princes, as subordinate and tributary states. Bede gives an instance of both in Edilfrid of Northumbria about the year 600, qui terras eorum, subjugatis aut *exterminatis* indigenis, aut tributarias genti Anglorum aut *habitabiles* fecit. Bed. 74.

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duties or prerogatives were attached to his dignity. By Bede the title is given to seven of the Saxon princes; other historians add an eighth. To their reigns may with propriety be referred the principal events which occurred in the kingdoms not immediately subject to their control *.

ÆLLA, BRETWALDA I.

The descent of Ælla on the southern coast, and his subsequent success, have been previously noticed. It is difficult to conjecture, by what means he acquired the precedency among the confederate chieftains. The kingdom of Sussex, which he founded (477), was the smallest and the least powerful of all the new principalities. This distinction may perhaps have been conceded to some pre-eminence which he enjoyed in his native country, or to some exploit of which the memory has perished. He has scarcely obtained the notice of our ancient chroniclers †.

CEAWLIN, BRETWALDA II.

Ethelbert, the fourth king of Kent, was the first to disturb the harmony which had united the Saxon princes.
A. D. 568. At the age of sixteen, he was taught to believe that the dignity of Bretwalda belonged to him as the representative of Hengist ‡. Under this impression he led an army against Ceawlin, king of Wessex, the grandson of Cerdic. At Wimbledon his temerity was severely chastised. Oslac and Cnebba, his two ealdormen, fell in the conflict, and Ethelbert himself escaped with difficulty from the pursuit of the enemy. Ceawlin, content with the humiliation of the king of Kent, directed his arms
A. D. 571. against the Britons. The battle of Bedford, which was fought under the direction of his brother Cuthwin, added

* See Bede, ii. 5. and the Saxon chronicle, p. 71. From the strong expressions of Bede, it would not be rash to infer that the inferior kings acknowledged themselves the vassals of the Bretwalda.

† Bed. et Chron. Sax. ibid. ‡ Malms. p. 12. Hunt. p. 315.

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to his dominions the towns of Leighton, Ailesbury, Bensington, and Eynsham: and six years afterwards the victory of Derham in Gloucestershire was marked by the fall of three British kings, Conmail, Condidan, and Farinmail, and was followed by the surrender of the important cities of Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath. When Ceawlin had settled his new conquests, he resumed offensive operations against the Britons. At Frithern on the left bank of the Severn he lost his son Cutha: but victory declared for the Saxons, the neighbouring towns were plundered, and the army returned home laden with booty. A few years afterwards, on the death of Cissa, the son of Ælla, Ceawlin added Sussex to his other dominions. But fortune deserted him in the zenith of his power. His own subjects rose in arms against him; Angles and Britons hastened to assist them; and after a bloody battle at Woodensburg in Wiltshire, the king was driven from the throne. He died in 593,* and was succeeded by his nephew Cedric. A. D 591.

ETHELBERT, BRETWALDA III.

The disgrace which had clouded the first years of Ethelbert, king of Kent, was afterwards dispersed by the glory of a long and prosperous reign. At the death of Ceawlin he had acquired (by what means we are not informed) the dignity of Bretwalda, and his authority was admitted by all the Saxon princes south of the Humber. While he was in possession of this dignity, he received intelligence that forty strangers had landed on the isle of Thanet. These were Augustine and his associates, partly Gauls, partly Italians, whom Pope Gregory the Great had sent for the benevolent purpose of converting the pagans. Ethelbert could not be unacquainted with the Christian religion. It was probably the belief of the majority of the British slaves in his dominions: it was certainly professed by his queen Bertha, A. D. 589. A. D. 596.

* Chron. Sax. 20—23. Ethelwerd, 834. Hunt. 315. In writing the name of this king, Bede (ii. 5) observes that the Angles and Saxons spoke different dialects: Cælin, qui *lingua eorum* Ceaulin vocabatur.

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the daughter of Charibert, king of Paris. The Saxon prince received the missionaries under an oak, in an open field, at the suggestion of his priests, who had told him that in such a situation the spells of the foreign magicians would lose their influence. At the appointed time, Augustine was introduced to the king. Before him were borne a silver cross, and a banner representing the Redeemer: behind him his companions walked in procession; and the air resounded with the anthems which they sang in alternate choirs. As soon as the interpreter had explained the object and motives of their mission, Ethelbert replied, that he had no inclination to abandon the gods of his fathers for a new and uncertain worship: but that, as the intention of the strangers was benevolent, and their promises were inviting, they might preach without molestation, and should be supported at his expense. This favourable answer filled them with joy; and they proceeded to Canterbury chanting, as they went, the following prayer: "By thy great mercy, O Lord, turn away, we "beseech thee, thy anger from this city and thy holy "temple, for we are sinners. Hallelujah *"

The care of the queen had already prepared a residence for the new apostles. They were lodged in the ancient church of St. Martin, which had originally belonged to the Britons, and had lately been repaired for the use of Liudhard, a Christian prelate who accompanied Bertha from Gaul. Curiosity led the Saxons to visit the strangers: they admired the ceremonies of their worship, compared their lives with those of the pagan priests, and learned to approve a religion, which could inspire so much piety, austerity, and disinterestedness. With secret pleasure Ethelbert viewed the alteration in the sentiments of his subjects: on the feast of Pentecost, in the year 597, he professed himself a Christian, and received the sacrament of baptism; and

* Bed. i. 25.

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on the following Christmas ten thousand of his subjects followed the example of their sovereign *.

The willing mind of the royal proselyte was now quickened by the letters and presents of the pontiff. He exerted all his influence to second the efforts of the missionaries; not indeed by violence (which he had learned to be repugnant to the mild spirit of the gospel), but by private exhortations, and by distinguishing the converts with marks of the royal favour. As soon as Augustine had received the episcopal consecration from the archbishop of Arles, the king retired to the city of Reculver, and gave to the missionaries Canterbury with the surrounding country. By his munificence the church of St. Saviour, originally built by the Britons, was repaired and allotted for the residence of the bishop and his clergy; while a new monastery was raised without the walls, for the use of the monks, and dedicated in honour of the apostles Peter and Paul. At the same time the number of the missionaries was augmented by the care of Gregory; and their success was rapidly extended to the boundaries of the kingdom. As each canton embraced the new doctrine, the heathen temple was converted into a Christian church; and, in order to wean the proselytes from their idolatrous practices, they were permitted, instead of the feasts which they had formerly celebrated around the altars of their gods, to assemble upon the more solemn festivals in the neighbourhood of the church, and to partake of a sober repast. To preside over the more distant converts, Augustine conferred the episcopal dignity on his disciple Justus. The new prelate fixed his residence in Rochester, in which the church of St. Andrew was erected by the piety of Ethelbert.

The kingdom of Essex was, at this period, governed by Saberct, the son of its founder, and the nephew of Ethelbert. The influence of the uncle introduced a

* Bed. i. 26. Greg. Epist. vii. 30.

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A. D. 604. missionary, the abbot Mellitus, to the notice of Saberct, who soon consented to receive the sacrament of baptism. The episcopal consecration was conferred on Mellitus: and London, which is represented as a populous and commercial city, was selected for the see of the new bishop. The cathedral was built and endowed at the joint expense of Ethelbert and Saberct *.

From the conversion of the Saxons the zeal of Augustine was directed to the reformation of the Britons. During one hundred and fifty years of unsuccessful warfare, the ancient discipline of their church had been nearly abolished, and the lives of their clergy were disgraced by vices the most repugnant to their profession †. To which of the British sees the archiepiscopal jurisdiction had been originally attached, is at present unknown; but Gregory had written to Augustine, that he had subjected all the bishops of Britain to his authority. The missionary, with the aid of Ethelbert, prevailed on the British prelates to meet him at a place, which has since been called Augustine's oak, in Worcestershire. After a long and unavailing debate, the conference was adjourned to another day. In the interval the Britons consulted a neighbouring hermit, who advised them to watch the conduct of Augustine; if he rose to meet them, they were to consider him as a man of unassuming disposition, and to listen to his demands; but if he kept his seat, they should condemn him of pride, and reject his authority. With this sapient admonition, which left to accident the decision of the controversy, seven bishops, with Dinoth, abbot of Bangor, repaired to the place of conference. Augustine happened to be seated; and did not rise at their arrival. Both his reasons and his authority were consequently despised. In points of doctrine there had been no difference between them: and to facilitate their compliance in other matters, the arch-

* Bed. i. 26. 30. iii. 3.

† Their character has been drawn in odious but probably too faithful colours by Gildas, a countryman and contemporary (Gild. ep. p. 23.

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bishop had reduced his demands to three heads: that they should observe the catholic computation of Easter, should adopt the Roman rite in the administration of baptism, and should join with the missionaries in preaching to the Saxons*. Each of these requests, in obedience to the advice of the hermit, was pertinaciously refused. "Know then," exclaimed the missionary with the tone of a prophet, "that if you will not assist me in "pointing out to the Saxons the way of life, they, by "the just judgment of God, will prove to you the minis-"ters of death." He did not live to see the prediction verified †.

The reign of Ethelbert lasted fifty-six years. Before his death he published a code of laws to regulate the administration of justice. For this improvement he was indebted to the suggestions of the missionaries, who, though they had been accustomed to the forms and decisions of Roman jurisprudence, did not, in legislating for the Saxons, attempt to abolish the national notions of equity, but wisely retained the principle of pecuniary compensation, a principle universally prevalent in the northern nations. Those crimes which appeared the most repugnant to the well-being of society, were scrupulously enumerated; theft in its different branches, murder, sacrilege, insults offered to female chastity, and infractions of the peace of the king and of the church: and to each was attached a proportionate fine, which rose in amount according to the dignity of the person against whom the offence was committed. From these laws it appears that all freemen were classed according to their property, and the offices which they held. To each class

* It is surprising that so many modern historians should have represented the Britons as holding different doctrines from those professed by the Roman missionaries, though these writers have never yet produced a single instance of such difference. Would Augustine have required the British clergy to join in the conversion of the Saxons, if they had taught doctrines which he condemned? Bede has related with great minuteness all the controversies between the two parties. They all regard points of discipline. Nowhere does the remotest hint occur of any difference respecting doctrine.

† Bed. ii. 2.

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was allotted its peculiar *mund* and *were*. The *mund* was the pecuniary mulct, which was intended to provide for the security of each individual, and of those under his roof. Thus the *mund* of a widow, if she were of the highest rank, was fifty shillings; of the second, twenty; of the third twelve; and of the fourth, six. The *were* was the sum at which the life of each person was rated. If he was killed, the murderer paid it as a compensation to his family: if he himself transgressed the laws, he forfeited it, in lieu of his head, to the king. But murder was not only an offence against individuals; it was also considered as an injury to the community: and the criminal was compelled to make what was esteemed a compensation to the violated justice of his country as well as to the family of the deceased. For this purpose, besides the *were*, he paid an additional fine, called the *wite*, which was received by the king or the chief magistrate of the district. The same distinctions, and the same punishments, with a few variations arising out of times and circumstances, were retained in all the laws of succeeding legislators *.

A. D. 616. Ethelbert died in 616. The crown devolved upon his son Eadbald, the violence of whose passions nearly replunged the nation into that idolatry from which it had just emerged. The youth and beauty of his stepmother, the relict of Ethelbert, induced him to take her to his bed; and when the missionaries admonished him to break the unnatural connexion, he abandoned a religion which forbade the gratification of his appetite. At the same time the three sons of Saberct (their father was dead,) restored the altars of the gods, and banished from the territory the bishop Mellitus. With Justus of Rochester he retired into Gaul: and Laurentius, the successor of Augustine in the see of Canterbury, had determined to follow their footsteps. On the morning of his intended departure, he made a last attempt on

* Leg. Sax. p. 1.

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the mind of Eadbald. His representations were successful. The king dismissed his step-mother, and recalled the fugitive prelates. The sincerity of his conversion was proved by his subsequent conduct: and Christianity, supported by his influence, assumed an ascendency which it ever afterwards preserved *.

REDWALD, BRETWALDA IV.

The Saxon princes refused that obedience to Eadbald which they had paid to his father: and the dignity of Bretwalda passed from the Jutes to the more powerful nations of the Angles. The East-Anglian throne was now filled by Redwald, one of the Uffingas. He had formerly paid a visit to Ethelbert, and at his persuasion had professed himself a Christian. But on his return home the new convert found himself assailed by the importunities of his wife, and the opposition of his people. His resolution was at last subdued: but to silence his conscience, he endeavoured to unite the two worships, and in the same temple, by the side of the statue of Woden, dedicated an altar to the God of the Christians †. A. D. 586.

We cannot appreciate his subsequent conduct, without reverting to the history of Northumbria. Edilfrid, the grandson of Ida, was a restless and sanguinary prince, who for several years had directed all his efforts against the neighbouring Britons. In many districts they had been entirely exterminated by his arms: in others they were happy to purchase his forbearance by the payment of an annual tribute. Aidan, king of the Scots, jealous of so formidable a neighbour, assembled all his forces, and marched as far as the stone of Degsa, a spot long celebrated in the traditions of the country. Though Theodbald, the brother of Edilfrid, was slain with his followers, victory declared for the Northumbrians. The greater part of the Scots were A. D. 592. A. D. 603.

* Bed. ii. 5. † Ibid. ii. 15.

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immolated to their vengeance; and the narrow escape of Aidan with a handful of attendants proved an instructive lesson to him and his successors. For more than a century no king of the Scots dared to meet the Northumbrians in battle *.

At the death of Ælla, the founder of the kingdom of Deira, Edilfrid, who had married his daughter, took possession of his dominions. Ælla had left a male child of the name of Edwin, about three years old, who was conveyed beyond the reach of the tyrant, and intrusted to the protection of Cadvan, the king of North Wales. The hospitality of the British prince drew on him the vengeance of the Northumbrian; and the two armies met in the vicinity of Chester. On the summit of a neighbouring hill Edilfrid espied an unarmed crowd, the monks of Bangor, who, like Moses in the wilderness, had hoped by their prayers to determine the fate of the battle. "If they pray," exclaimed the pagan, "they "fight against us;" and ordered a detachment of his army to put them to the sword. Victory was, as usual, true to his standard. Chester was taken and Bangor demolished. The scattered ruins demonstrated to subsequent generations the extent of that celebrated monastery †.

The son of Ælla, who was incessantly harassed by the jealousy of Edilfrid, wandered from the hospitable mansion of Cadvan through the different principalities of the Britons and Saxons. At last he found an asylum in the court of Redwald. The fidelity of that prince was immediately tempted by the threats and promises of Edilfrid; and after a long struggle he preferred the

* Bed. i. 34. The stone of Degsa is thought to be either Dalston near Carlisle, or Dawston near Jedburgh. Aidan was the seventh of the Scottish kings, reckoning Loarn for the first. O'Conor, Proleg. i. p. cxxvi., ii. p. lxxxiii.

† Bed. ii. 2. The number of the monks slain on the hill is generally said to have been 1200, but Bede observes that others besides the monks had assembled to pray. He supposes that the victory of Edilfrid fulfilled the prediction of Augustine.

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friendship of a powerful monarch to the danger of protecting a solitary exile. On the very evening while the council deliberated on his fate, Edwin was sitting alone in the dark at the gate of the palace, when a friendly voice whispered in his ear that it was time to flee, for the king had given his assent to the demands of his enemy. "I have known too much misery," replied the prince, "to be anxious for life. If I must die, no death "can be more acceptable than that which is inflicted by "royal treachery." He remained in the same place musing on his melancholy situation, when a favourable dream, which had considerable influence on his subsequent conduct, afforded him a faint gleam of hope, and his friend, stealing to him a second time, informed him that he was safe. The solicitations of the queen had overcome the perfidious resolve of her husband *.

The moment Redwald determined to reject the proposals of Edilfrid, he saw the necessity of anticipating his resentment. The Northumbrian with a small body A. D. of followers was hastening to surprise his enemy, when 616. he was met by the whole of the East-Anglian forces on the right bank of the Idel in Nottinghamshire. They were skilfully (so we are told) arrayed in three bodies: and their helmets, spears, and banners gave them a martial and formidable appearance. Edilfrid, though disconcerted, scorned to retire; and rushing on the first division, destroyed it with its leader, Rægenheri or Rainer, the son of Redwald. But the Northumbrians were quickly trampled under foot by the multitude of the East-Anglians; and the king, having opened with his sword a way into the midst of his enemies, fell on the bodies of those whom he had slain. The conquerors hastened to improve their advantage. By the men of Deira Edwin was received with acclamations of joy: the children of Edilfrid fled into the north of the island: and the Bernicians submitted cheerfully to the

* Bed. ii. 12.

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good fortune of the son of Ælla. Redwald, having placed his friend on the united throne of the two kingdoms, returned in triumph to his dominions*.

EDWIN, Bretwalda V.

The martial genius of Edilfrid had raised Northumbria to an equality with the most powerful of the Anglo-Saxon states: under the government of Edwin it assumed a marked superiority, and conferred the title of Bretwalda on him and his immediate successors. The steps by which he ascended to this pre-eminence are not recorded: but the history of his conversion to Christianity has been preserved by the pen of the venerable Bede.

In the ninth year of his reign Edwin had married Edilberga, the daughter of Ethelbert, the deceased king of Kent. The zeal of Eadbald had previously stipulated that his sister should enjoy the free exercise of her religion; and had obtained from Edwin a promise that he would himself examine the evidences of the Christian faith. The queen was accompanied by Paulinus, a Roman missionary, who had lately received the episcopal consecration. The king faithfully observed his word: but, though he made no objection to the practice of Christianity by Edilberga, he shewed no inclination to embrace it himself. It was in vain that Paulinus preached; that the queen entreated; that pope Boniface V. sent letters and presents. Edwin appeared immovably attached to the worship of his fathers.

The kingdom of Wessex was now governed by two princes, Cuichelm and Cynegils, the successors of Ceol-
A. D. wulf. They bore with impatience the superiority assumed
626. by Edwin; and, unable to contend with him in the field, attempted to remove him by assassination. Eumer, in quality of an envoy from Cuichelm, demanded an audience of Edwin. He had concealed under his clothes a two-edged dagger, which had been previously dipped in poison; and while the king earnestly listened to his

* Bed. ii. 12. Chron. Sax. p. 27. Hunt. 191.

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discourse, the assassin aimed a desperate stroke at his heart. His design did not escape the eye of the faithful Lilla, who threw himself between Edwin and the dagger, and fell dead at the feet of his master. So great was the force of the stroke, that the king was wounded through the body of his attendant. Every sword was instantly drawn: but Eumer defended himself with such desperate courage, that he killed Frodheri, another thane, before he was overpowered by numbers.

The preceding night Edilberga had been delivered of a daughter, and Edwin publicly returned thanks to the gods for his own preservation, and the health of his consort. Paulinus did not omit the opportunity of ascribing both events to the protection of Christ, whose resurrection from the grave had been that very day celebrated by the queen. His discourse made impression on the mind of the king, who permitted him to baptize his daughter, and promised to become a Christian, if he returned victorious from his meditated expedition against the perfidious king of Wessex *.

At the head of a powerful army, Edwin marched against his enemies. The two brothers were defeated; five of the West-Saxon chieftains fell in the battle; and the country was pillaged by the victors. Having satisfied his resentment, the king returned to Northumbria, and was reminded of his promise by Paulinus. From that moment he abstained from the worship of his gods; though he still hesitated to embrace Christianity. He consulted alternately his priests and the missionary, and revolved in solitude their opposite arguments. His mind was strongly influenced by the recollection of his dream in East-Anglia; and as it had been fulfilled in every other particular, he deemed it his duty to accomplish it by becoming a Christian. Having taken this resolution he called an assembly of his witan or counsellors, and

* She was baptized with eleven other female children belonging to the queen's household. Bed. ii. 9. Chron. Sax. 27

required each to state his sentiments on the subject. The first, who ventured to speak, was Coiffi, the high-priest, who, instead of opposing, advised the adoption of the foreign worship. His motive was singular. No one, he said, had served the gods more assiduously than himself, and yet few had been less fortunate. He was weary of deities who were so indifferent or so ungrateful, and would willingly try his fortune under the new religion. To this profound theologian succeeded a thane, whose discourse, while it proves the good sense of the speaker, exhibits a striking picture of national manners. He sought for information respecting the origin and the destiny of man. "Often," said he, "O "king, in the depth of winter, while you are feasting "with your thanes, and the fire is blazing on the hearth "in the midst of the hall, you have seen a bird, pelted "by the storm, enter at one door, and escape at the "other. During its passage it was visible: but whence "it came, or whither it went, you knew not. Such to "me appears the life of man. He walks the earth for a "few years: but what precedes his birth, or what is to "follow after his death, we cannot tell. Undoubtedly, "if the new religion can unfold these important secrets, "it must be worthy our attention." At the common request Paulinus was introduced, and explained the principal doctrines of Christianity. Coiffi declared himself a convert, and to prove his sincerity, offered to set fire to the neighbouring temple of Godmundingham. With the permission of Edwin, he called for a horse and arms, both of which were forbidden to the priests of the Angles. As he rode along, he was followed by crowds, who attributed his conduct to temporary insanity. To their astonishment, bidding defiance to the gods of his fathers, he struck his spear into the wall of the temple. They had expected that the fires of heaven would have avenged the sacrilege. The impunity of the apostate dissipated their alarms: and urged by his example and

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exhortations they united in kindling the flames, which with the fane consumed the deities, that had been so long the objects of their terror and veneration *.

When Gregory the Great arranged the future economy of the Anglo-Saxon church, he directed that the northern metropolitan should fix his residence at York. Edwin accordingly bestowed on Paulinus a house and possessions in that city, and was baptized in a church hastily erected for the ceremony. Pope Honorius was immediately informed of the event; and at his request granted the use of the pallium to the archbishops of Canterbury and York, with the permission, that when one of these prelates died, the survivor should consecrate his successor, without waiting to consult the Roman pontiff. To Paulinus Edwin continued to prove himself a patron and assistant; and his mansions at Yeverin in Glendale, and at Catterick in Yorkshire, were long respected by posterity, as the places where their fathers had been instructed in the doctrine of the gospel, and had received the sacrament of baptism. Nor could his zeal be satisfied with the conversion of his own subjects. At A. D. the death of Redwald, the thanes of East-Anglia, who 627 had witnessed his virtues and abilities, offered him the regal dignity. His gratitude declined it in favour of Eorpwald, the son of his benefactor; and his piety prompted him to explain to the young king the principles of Christianity. But Eorpwald was slain after a short reign of three years; and the conversion of the A. D East-Angles was reserved for the united efforts of Sige- 631. bert, his brother and successor, and of Felix, a Burgundian prelate, who received his mission from Honorius, archbishop of Canterbury †.

The empire of Edwin was more extensive than that of any preceding Bretwalda. The islands of Anglesey and Man were subject to his authority ‡; all the princes of

* Bed. ii. 13. † Ibid. 14, 15.

‡ Anglesey was computed at 960 hides, Man at something more than 300. Bed. ii. 9.

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the Britons paid him tribute; and, if among the Saxon kings, Eadbald of Kent retained a nominal independence, he owed the benefit, not to his own power, but to the influence of his sister Edilberga. As a token of his authority, the Northumbrian assumed a distinction unknown to the Saxons; and the Tufa, a military ensign of Roman origin, was always borne before him when he appeared in public. Anxious to enforce the observance of the laws, he severely punished every act of theft or rapacity; and the advantages resulting from his inflexible administration of justice were long preserved in the recollection of posterity by a proverb, the truth of which is attested by Bede: "That in the days of Edwin a woman "with a babe at her breast might have travelled over "the island without suffering an insult." On the highways, at convenient intervals, he placed cisterns of stone to collect water from the nearest fountains, and attached to them cups of brass for the refreshment of passengers; an improvement which in the seventh century excited applause and gratitude*.

A.D. 627. After the death of Ceorl of Mercia, Penda, the son of his predecessor, possessed the power, without the title, of king †. He was then advanced in age, a brave and experienced warrior, and of insatiable ambition. For some years he bore with impatience the superiority of the Northumbrian: at last he found in Ceadwalla, king of Gwynez or North Wales, an associate of equal daring and of similar views. They united their armies, unfurled the standard of rebellion, and marched into

A.D. 633. Yorkshire. The battle was fought in Hatfield chase, between the Don and the Torre. The Northumbrian army was routed; and Edwin perished with great part of his followers. Of his sons by his first wife Quoen-

* Bed. ii. 5. 9. 16. The Tufa is supposed by some to have been a globe, by others a tuft of feathers, fixed on a spear.

† By the Saxon chronicle (p. 28), and most other writers, he is said to have begun his reign in 626, and to have reigned thirty years: but Bede expressly says that he reigned but twenty two, which places the first year of his reign at the period of the battle of Hatfield.

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burga, the daughter of Ceorl, Osfrid was slain with his father, Eadfrid implored the protection of his relation Penda, and was afterwards murdered by him in violation of his oath. Edilberga with her children, and Paulinus, escaped by sea to the court of her brother in Kent*.

The confederates exercised without mercy the licence of victory. They differed in religion; for the Britons were Christians, the Mercians idolaters: but both were equally solicitous to wreak their resentment on the vanquished, the one that they might revenge the injuries formerly inflicted on their country, the other that they might punish these apostates from the worship of their fathers. Of the two the Britons were the more savage. They spared neither age nor sex; and their cruelty, instead of being appeased by the death, exulted in the torture of their captives Having spread devastation from one end of the country to the other, they separated. Ceadwalla remained to accomplish his boast of utterly exterminating the Northumbrians; Penda marched A. D. with his Mercians into the territory of the East-An- 634. gles. Sigebert their king had lately retired into a monastery, and had resigned the honours and cares of royalty to his cousin Egeric: but the East-Angles were alarmed at the approaching danger, and clamorously demanded the aged monarch, who had so often led them to victory. With reluctance he left the tranquillity of his cell, to mix in the tumult of the combat. But arms were refused by the royal monk as repugnant to his profession, and he directed with a wand the operations of the army. The fortune of the Mercians prevailed; and both Sigebert and Egeric fell in the service of their countr" †.

OSWALD, Bretwalda VI.

The unfortunate death of Edwin dissolved for a short period the union of the Northumbrian kingdoms. Among the Deiri the family of Ælla retained the ascend-

* Bed. ii. 20. Chron. Sax. p. 29. † Bed. ii. 20 iii. 18.

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ency; and the sceptre was placed in the hands, not indeed of the children of Edwin, but of their cousin Osric, a prince mature in age, and experienced in battle. In Bernicia the memory of Ida was still cherished with gratitude, and Eanfrid, the eldest of the sons of Edilfrid, returning from his retreat in the mountains of Caledonia, ascended the throne of his ancestors. Each of these princes had formerly received baptism, Osric from Paulinus, Eanfrid from the monks of St. Columba at Icolmkill: and each with equal facility relapsed into the errors of paganism. If their ambition was satisfied with the possession of royalty, they quickly paid the price of it with their blood. Ceadwalla still continued his ravages. He was in the city of York, when Osric, hastening to surprise him, was attacked unexpectedly himself, and perished on the spot. Eanfrid, terrified by the fate of Osric and the fame of Ceadwalla, visited the Briton with only twelve attendants, solicited for peace, and was perfidiously put to death. The indignant piety of the Northumbrians expunged the names of these apostate princes from the catalogue of their kings; and the time in which they reigned was distinguished in their annals by this expressive term, "The 'unhappy year *."

By the deaths of Osric and Eanfrid the duty of revenging his family and country devolved on Oswald, the younger of the sons of Edilfrid (635). Impelled by despair, he sought, with a small but resolute band, the army of the Britons, and at the dawn of day discovered them negligently encamped in the neighbourhood of Hexham. Oswald had not imitated the apostacy of his brother. By his orders a cross of wood was hastily formed, and fixed in the ground: when turning to his army he exclaimed: "Soldiers, let us bend our knees, and beg of the true and living God to protect us from the insolence and ferocity of our enemies: for he

* Bed. iii. 1. 9

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"knows that our cause is just, and that we fight for the "salvation of our country." At his command they knelt down to pray: from prayer they rose to battle; and victory was the reward of their piety and valour. Ceadwalla was slain; and his invincible army was annihilated. By the common consent of the Bernicii and Deiri Oswald assumed the government of the two nations. He was allied to each: for, if he was descended by his father from Ida, by his mother Acha he numbered Ælla among his progenitors *.

The piety of Oswald, which ascribed his success to the interposition of Heaven, prompted him to solicit from his former teachers a supply of missionaries, who might instruct his people in the doctrines of the gospel. The first who was sent, Corman, a monk of a morose and rigid disposition, returned in disgust to his monastery: but, when in presence of the community he accused the ignorance and barbarism of the Northumbrians, he received a severe and sensible rebuke. "Bro- "ther," exclaimed a voice, "the fault was yours. You "exacted from the pagans more than their weakness "would bear. You should have first stooped to them, "and gradually have raised their minds to the sub- "lime truths of the gospel." At the sound every eye was fixed on the speaker, a private monk of the name of Aidan, who was chosen as the successor of Corman by the unanimous suffrage of his brethren. Having received the episcopal consecration, he repaired to the court of Oswald, who condescended to explain in English the instructions, which the bishop delivered in his native language. Aidan received from the king the donation of the isle of Lindisfarne, since called Holy Island, in which he built a monastery, long an object of veneration to the Northumbrians. With unwearied perseverance he traversed every part of the kingdom; and his efforts were seconded by the industry of several

* Bed. iii. 2. 6.

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zealous monks, who had abandoned their native country to partake in his labours. The austerity of his life, his contempt of riches, his charity to the poor, and his attachment to the duties of his profession, gained the hearts, while his arguments convinced the understanding, of his proselytes. Christianity soon became the predominant religion in Northumbria *.

Oswald not only claimed that pre-eminence over the Saxons, which had been possessed by his predecessor, but also compelled the princes of the Picts and Scots to number themselves among his vassals †. Like Edwin he also contributed to add a royal proselyte to the number of Saxon Christians. At the time when Birinus, a foreign bishop, commissioned by pope Honorius, landed on the coast of Wessex, Oswald visited that kingdom to demand the daughter of Cynegils in marriage. Their united efforts induced the monarch, his family, and principal thanes, to receive the sacrament of baptism. Even the obstinacy of Cuichelm was subdued; and on his death-bed that prince professed himself a Christian. Cynegils bestowed the city of Dorchester, near the conflux of the Tame and the Isis, on the apostle: Oswald, in quality of Bretwalda, confirmed the donation ‡.

A. D. 642. But the fate of Edwin awaited Oswald, and the same prince was destined to be the minister of his death. In the eighth year of his reign, and the thirty-eighth of his age, the king of Northumbria fought with Penda and his Mercians in the field of Maser §, Aug. 5th). The pagans were victorious. Oswald, surrounded by enemies, was slain. His last words were repeated by the gratitude of the Northumbrians, and a proverb preserved them in the remembrance of their posterity. "Lord have mercy on the souls of my people," said

* Bed. iii. 3. 5.

† Ibid. iii. 6. By Cuminius, a contemporary Scottish monk, he is called, totius Britanniæ imperator. Cum. Vit. St. Colum. p. 44.

‡ Bed. iii. 7.

§ By most supposed to be Oswestre in Shropshire: by some Winwich in Lancashire.

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Oswald, as he fell. The ferocity of Penda did not spare the dead body of his adversary, but severed the head and arms from the trunk, and fixed them on high poles driven into the ground. The body of Oswald was buried at Bardney, and his standard of purple and gold was suspended over the grave. The head and arms were taken down the year after his death by Oswio his successor, and deposited, the head in the monastery of Lindisfarne, the arms in the royal city of Bamborough *.

Bamborough was the first place that ventured to stop the destructive progress of the Mercians after the battle of Maserfield. Situated on a rock, and protected on one side by a steep ascent, on the other by the waters of the ocean, it bade defiance to their exertions. But the genius of Penda was fertile in expedients, and that which he adopted, displays the ferocity of his disposition. By his order the neighbouring villages were demolished; every combustible material was collected from the ruins, and reared up against the walls; and as soon as the wind blew fiercely towards the city, fire was set to the pile. Already were the smoke and flames wafted over the heads of the trembling inhabitants, when the wind suddenly changed, and the fire spent its fury in the opposite direction. Chagrined and confounded, Penda raised the siege, and led back his army †

OSWIO, BRETWALDA VII.

The retreat of Penda afforded leisure to the Northumbrian thanes to elect a successor to Oswald. The object of their choice was his brother Oswio, who inherited the abilities of his predecessor, and who, to strengthen his throne, married Eanfled, the daughter of Edwin ‡. But the power of the nation was now broken: and his long reign of twenty-eight years, though it was occasionally distinguished by brilliant successes, was ha- A. D. 642.

* Bed. iii 9. 11, 12. Chron. Sax. p. 32 † Bed. iii. 16.
‡ Ibid. iii. 18. Nen. c. 44.

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rassed at intervals by the inroads of the Mercians, the hostility of his nephew Oidilwald, and the ambition of his own son Alchfrid.

In the second year of his reign, he was alarmed by the claims of a dangerous competitor of the house of Ælla, Oswin the son of Osric; and prudence or necessity induced him to consent to a compromise, by which he allotted Deira to his rival, but reserved to himself Bernicia and the northern conquests. The character of Oswin has been drawn in the most pleasing colours by the pencil of the venerable Bede. He was affable, just, religious, and generous. His virtues were idolized by his subjects; and his court was crowded with foreign Saxons, who solicited employment in his service. Six years the two princes lived in apparent amity with each other; but in the seventh their secret jealousy broke into open hostilities. Oswin, seeing no probability of success, disbanded his army, and concealed himself, with one attendant, at Gilling, the house of the ealdorman
A. D. Hundwald. The perfidious thane betrayed him to his
651. enemy; and nothing but his death could satisfy the policy of Oswio. The bishop Aidan, who loved and revered him for his virtues, bitterly lamented his fate, and in twelve days followed him to the grave *. The Northumbrian, however, did not reap the fruit of his cruelty. Oidilwald, the son of Oswald, was placed on the throne of the Deiri, probably by the superior influence of Penda †.

That restless monarch seemed determined to obtain the dignity of Bretwalda. He had lately expelled Coinwalch from the throne of Wessex, because that prince had repudiated his daughter Sexburga. He now directed his arms against Northumbria, penetrated again as far as Bamborough, and set fire to every habitation in the line of his march ‡. Oswio, warned by the fate of his immediate predecessors Edwin and Oswald, made

* Bed. iii. 14. † Ibid. and c. 22, 24. ‡ Ibid. iii. 17.

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every effort to mitigate the resentment of so formidable an enemy. He sent him the most valuable presents; his second son Egfrid was delivered as a hostage to the care of Cynwise the queen of Penda; and Alchfrid his eldest son married Cyneburge the daughter of the Mercian. This connexion between the two families brought Peada, the son of Penda, to the Northumbrian court on a visit to his sister. There he saw and admired Alchfleda, the daughter of Oswio: but the difference of religion would have opposed an insuperable obstacle to their union, had not Alchfrid prevailed on his friend to listen to the teachers, and embrace the doctrines, of Christianity. When his sincerity was questioned, he replied with warmth, that no consideration, not even the refusal of Alchfleda, should provoke him to return to the worship of Woden; and at his departure he took with him four priests to instruct his subjects, the southern Mercians, or Middle-Angles, whom he governed with the title of king during the life of his father. It was to be feared that the conversion of Peada would irritate the fanaticism of Penda: but the old king, though he persevered in his attachment to the religion of his ancestors, expressed his admiration of the morality of the gospel, and permitted it to be taught to his subjects. To the converts however he shrewdly observed, that as they had preferred the new worship, it was but just that they should practise its precepts: and that every individual would incur his displeasure, who should unite the manners of the paganism which he had abjured, with the profession of the Christianity which he had embraced *.

About the same time another royal proselyte was led to the waters of baptism. By gratitude Sigeberct, king of Essex, was attached to Oswio, and paid frequent visits to the court of Northumbria. Oswio laboured to convince his friend of the folly of idolatry. He frequently inculcated that images formed by the hand of A. D. 653

* Bed. iii 21.

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the artist, could possess none of the properties of the Deity, and that the God, who deserved the worship of man, must be an almighty and eternal being, the creator, the ruler, and the disposer of the universe* Sigeberct listened attentively to his royal instructor, consulted the thanes who attended him, and was baptized by Finan, the successor of Aidan, at Waubottle in Northumberland. The presbyter Cedd was consecrated bishop of the East Saxons, and fixed his residence in London.

But Penda had again summoned his Mercians to arms. The first victim of his resentment was Anna, king of the East-Angles, who for three years had afforded an asylum to Coinwalch, king of Wessex. He
A. D. 654. fell in battle, and was succeeded by his brother Edilhere, who artfully directed the hostility of the conqueror against the Northumbrians. It was in vain that Oswio endeavoured to avert the danger by the offer of submission and tribute. The Mercian declared that it was his object to exterminate the whole nation: the presents which had been sent were distributed among his auxiliaries; and thirty vassal chieftains, Saxons and Britons, swelled with their followers the numbers of his army. Despair at last nerved the courage of Oswio.
A. D. 655. With his son Alchfrid, and a small but resolute force, he advanced to meet the multitude of the invaders. The night before the eventful contest, he fervently implored the assistance of Heaven, and vowed, if he returned victorious, to devote his infant daughter Ælfreda to the monastic profession. In the morning Oidilwald, ashamed perhaps of fighting against his countrymen, separated from the Mercians, and remained at a distance a quiet spectator of the combat. The valour or despair of the Northumbrians prevailed. Of the thirty vassal chieftains who served under the banner of the Mercian, only Oidilwald, and Catgubail the British king of Gwynea,

* Bed. iii. 21.

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escaped. Penda did not survive the destruction of his army. This hoary veteran, who had reached his eightieth year, and had stained his sword with the blood of three kings of the East-Angles, and of two of the Northumbrians, had been borne from the field by the crowd of the fugitives, but was overtaken by the pursuers, and put to death. The battle was fought at Winwidfield near Leeds; and the Are, which had overflowed its banks, swept away more of the Mercians in their flight, than had fallen by the sword of the enemy. The Anglo-Saxons were accustomed to preserve by proverbs the memory of remarkable events. Of this victory it was usually said: "In Winwid's stream was revenged the "death of Anna, the deaths of Sigebert and Egeric, and "the deaths of Edwin and Oswald *."

The fate of Penda and the annihilation of his army opened an unexpected prospect to the ambition of Oswio. With rapidity he over-ran East-Anglia and Mercia, subdued the astonished inhabitants, and made them feel the miseries, which they had so often inflicted. Mercia he divided into two portions. The provinces on the north of the Trent he annexed to his own dominions: those on the south, out of compassion for his daughter, he permitted to remain under the government of her husband Peada. But that unfortunate prince did not long enjoy the donation. At the next festival of Easter he perished, by the treachery, it is said, of his wife; and his territory was immediately occupied by the Northumbrians.

The obligation of his vow now demanded the attention of Oswio. Ælfleda, a child not one year old, was entrusted to the care of the abbess Hilda; and her dower was fixed at one hundred and twenty hides of land in Bernicia, and at an equal number in Deira. This munificent donation enabled the sisterhood to remove from Hartlepool to a more convenient situation at Whitby,

* Bed. iii. 24. Nenn. c. 64. Alc. de Pont. apud Gale, p. 712.

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where the royal nun lived the space of fifty-nine years in the practice of the monastic duties, during one half of which she exercised the office of abbess. The king soon afterwards endowed another monastery at Gilling. His conscience reproached him with the blood of Oswin; and at the solicitation of his queen Eanfled, he established, on the very spot in which that prince had been slain, a community of monks who were charged with the obligation of offering up daily prayers for the soul of the murdered king, and for that of the royal murderer *.

Oswio was now Bretwalda in the fullest sense of the word. The union of Mercia with Northumbria had placed under his control a greater extent of territory than had belonged to any of his predecessors: the princes of the Britons and Saxons unanimously submitted to his authority; and the greater part of the Picts and Scots were careful to avert his enmity by the payment of annual tribute. Yet long before his death his power suffered a considerable diminution †. Three Mercian ealdormen, Immin, Eafha and Eadbert, took up arms to recover the independence of their country, expelled the Northumbrian magistrates, and conferred the sceptre on a prince whom they had anxiously concealed from the researches of the Bretwalda,—Wulphere, the youngest son of Penda. In defiance of the Northumbrian he retained his authority, and united under his government the Mercians, the Middle-Angles, and the Lindiswaras, or natives of the county of Lincoln (656). To add to the mortification of Oswio, his eldest son Alchfrid required a portion of the Northumbrian territory with the title of king. A hint in Bede would lead us to suppose that he even drew the sword against his father. As Oidilwald had perished, the ambition of Alchfrid was gratified, and a kingdom was assigned him in the country of the Deiri ‡.

From politics Oswio directed the attention of his de-

* Bed. iii. 24. † Bed. ii. 5; iii. 24. Hence pope Vitalian calls Britain, Oswio's island—suam insulam. Id. iii. 29. ‡ Bed. iii. 14; iii. 21.

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clining years to the concerns of religion. Christianity had now been preached in all the Saxon kingdoms except Sussex: but as the missionaries had come from different countries, though they taught the same doctrine, they disagreed in several points of ecclesiastical discipline. Of these the most important regarded the canonical time for the celebration of Easter, a subject, which had for several centuries disturbed the peace of the church. That it depended on the commencement of the equinoctial lunation, was universally admitted: but according to the Roman astronomers that lunation might begin as early as the fifth, according to the Alexandrian it could not begin before the eighth, day of March. The consequence of this diversity of opinion was, that when the new moon fell on the fifth, sixth, or seventh of that month, the Latin celebrated the feast of Easter a full lunation before the Greek Christians*. In the middle of the sixth century the Roman church, weary of the disputes occasioned by these different computations, had adopted a new cycle, which agreed in every important point with the Alexandrian calculation. But this improvement was unknown to the British Christians, who at that period were wholly employed in opposing the invaders of their country; and they continued to observe the ancient cycle of Sulpicius Severus, which was now become peculiar to themselves. Hence it occasionally happened that Easter, and in consequence the other festivals of the year depending on that solemnity, were celebrated at different times by the Saxon Christians, accordingly as they had been instructed by Scottish, or by Roman and Gallic, missionaries.

Another, but subordinate subject of dispute was the form of the ecclesiastical tonsure. A custom had long prevailed that the clergy should be distinguished by the manner in which they wore their hair; and the mission-

* There were a few other variations in the paschal canons, which contributed still more to perplex the subject. They may be seen in Smith's Bede, App. ix. p. 698, and Dr. O'Conor, Proleg. ii. 119.

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aries, not acquainted with the different modes prevailing in different countries, were at their first meeting mutually surprised and shocked at what they deemed the uncanonical appearance of each other. The Romans shaved the crown of the head, and considered the surrounding circle of hair as a figure of the wreath of thorns, which had been fixed on the temples of Christ by the cruelty of his persecutors. The Scots permitted the hair to grow on the back, but shaved in the form of a crescent the front of the head. The former pleaded in defence of their tonsure that it had descended to them from St. Peter, and accused their adversaries of wearing the distinctive mark of Simon Magus and his disciples. The latter could not disprove the assertions of their adversaries, but contended that their method of shaving the head, however impious in its origin, had been sanctified by the virtues of those who had practised it. Each party obstinately adhered to their own custom, and severely condemned that of the other.

If such questions could divide the missionaries, it cannot be surprising that they should perplex their disciples. The restoration of concord was reserved for the zeal and authority of Oswio. He, with the majority of his subjects, had derived the knowledge of Christianity from the Scots: his queen Eanfled, and his son Alchfrid, had been educated by the disciples of the Romans. Thus Oswio saw his own family divided into factions; and the same solemnities celebrated at different times in his own palace. Desirous to procure uniformity, he summoned the champions of the two parties to meet at Whitby, and to discuss the merits of their respec-
A. D. tive customs. Wilfrid, afterwards bishop of York,
664. rested the cause of the Romans on the authority of St. Peter, and the practice of the universal church, which ought not to yield to the pretensions of a few obscure congregations of Christians on the western shores of Britain. Colman boasted of the sanctity of St. Columba, the apostle of the north, and contended that nothing

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should be changed, which he and his successors had sanctioned with their approbation. Oswio terminated the debate by declaring that he should prefer the institutions of St. Peter to those of St. Columba. The decision was applauded by the majority of the meeting; and of the Scottish monks, several conformed to the practice of their opponents, the others retired in silent discontent to the parent monastery in the isle of Hii *.

In the same year, the twenty-second of Oswio, the beginning of the month of May was rendered remarkable by a total eclipse of the sun. The ignorance of the observers did not fail to predict the most alarming disasters; and the event seemed to justify their predictions. The summer was extremely dry: the heavens, to use the expression of an ancient chronicler, appeared to be on fire; and a pestilence of the most fatal description (it was called the yellow plague) depopulated the island †. It made its first appearance on the southern coasts, and gradually advancing towards the north, had ravaged before winter Deira and Bernicia. It reached Ireland in the beginning of August. The symptoms of this destructive disease have not been described by historians: but it baffled the medical skill of the natives; and many of the East-Saxons, unable to account for it on natural grounds, attributed it to the anger of the gods, and reverted to their former idolatry. From the instances in Bede, it appears that many died in the course of a single day, and that of those who caught the infection, hardly more than one in thirty recovered. During twenty years it visited and revisited the different provinces of Britain and Ireland. Bede does not attempt to calculate the amount of its ravages, but is content with the vague terms of depopulated districts, and multitudes of dead. In Ireland an ancient writer computes its victims at two-thirds of the inhabitants ‡. The highlands of Caledonia were alone free from this dreadful

* Bed. iii. 25. 26. † Compare Bede (iii. xxvii.) with the Ulster Annals. (Usher, Ant. Brit. p. 948.) ‡ Vit. Geral. Sax. apud Ant. Brit. p. 1164.

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visitation. The natives piously ascribed the exemption to the intercession of their patron St. Columba, and persuaded themselves that even in the infected countries they were inaccessible to its attacks. Adamnan, the abbot of Icolmkille, relates, with obvious emotions of national pride, that twice during this period he visited the king of Northumbria, and, though he lived in the midst of the contagion, though numbers were daily dying around him, neither he, nor any of his attendants, took the infection *.

The pestilence no sooner appeared, than it proved fatal to several of the most distinguished characters in the island. Catgualet, king of Gwynez, Ercombert of Kent, Ethelwald of Sussex, Deusdedit archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops of London and Lindisfarne, Boisil, the celebrated abbot of Mailros, and Ethelburga, the royal abbess of Berking, were among the first of its victims. The death of the metropolitan afforded Oswio an opportunity of promoting his favourite system of religious uniformity. He consulted with Egbert, the new king of Kent; and by their concurrence, the presbyter Wighard, who had been chosen to succeed to the archiepiscopal dignity, was sent to Rome to ask the advice of the Apostolic see. But in that city the new prelate fell a victim to the pestilence which he had escaped in his own country: and his death was announced in a letter to Oswio from pope Vitalian. The pontiff, however, assured the king that he would gratify his wishes by selecting for the church of Canterbury a person equal to so exalted a station; and after some delay Theodore, a monk of Tarsus, whose virtue and erudition had been honoured with general applause, landed in Kent, with the title of archbishop of Britain. His authority was immediately acknowledged by all the Saxon prelates: new bishoprics were established; synods were held; and uniformity of discipline was every where observed.

* Adamn. Vit. St. Columb. ii. c. xlvii. p. 153.

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Oswio died in 670. With him expired both the title and authority of Bretwalda. The power of Northumbria had for some years been on the decline; while the neighbouring state of Mercia, created by the genius of Penda, had gradually matured its strength, and the southern kingdom of Wessex had, with a slow but steady progress, constantly advanced in the subjugation of the Britons. These three rival nations will, in the following chapter, solicit the attention of the reader: the feeble kingdoms of Essex, Kent, East-Anglia, and Sussex, sometimes the allies, but generally the vassals of their more powerful neighbours, cannot awaken sufficient interest to deserve a more detailed and separate narration.

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CHAPTER III.

ANGLO-SAXONS

Kings of Northumbria—of Mercia—Ethelbald—Offa—Cenulf—of Wessex —Cædwalla—Ina—Cynewulf—Egbert—Ethelwulf—Ethelbald—Ethelbert—Ethelred.

NORTHUMBRIA.

From Oswio the Northumbrian sceptre was transferred to the hands of Egfrid, the elder of his surviving sons *. The Picts, despising the youth of the new monarch, assembled under their prince Bernherth, and asserted their independence. But Egfrid, with a vigour which surprised and dismayed them, put himself at the head of a body of horse, entered their territory, defeated them in a bloody battle, and compelled them to submit again to the superior power of the Northumbrians. With equal expedition he anticipated and defeated the designs of Wulphere, king of Mercia, who numbered among his vassals most of the southern chieftains. The victory broke for a while the power of the Mercians. Wulphere died soon after: and his kingdom was at first seized by the Northumbrian, but restored to Ethelred, who had married Osthryda, the sister of Egfrid †.

A. D. 670.

Religious prejudice has conferred an adventitious

* Malmsbury (20, 21) and several later writers say that Alchfrid the elder son was still alive, but rejected on account of illegitimacy: and that he ascended the throne after the death of Egfrid. From a diligent examination of Bede it appears to me that they have confounded Alchfrid, and Aldfrid, and made the two but one person. Aldfrid was illegitimate, and *thought* to be the son of Oswio. He lived in spontaneous exile among the Scots through his desire of knowledge, and was called to the throne after the decease of the legitimate offspring of Oswio. See Bede, p. 129. 132. 178. 206, 207. 234. 247. 293. Also the poem De Abbat. Lindis. in Act. SS. Bened. p. 305.

† Edd. Vit. Wilf. xix. xx. 61, 62. Bed. iv. 12.

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interest on the reign of Egfrid; and his quarrel with Wilfrid, the celebrated bishop of York, occupies a distinguished but disproportionate space in our modern histories. Wilfrid was a noble Northumbrian, who had travelled for improvement; and after his return from Italy, had been selected as the instructor and confidant of Alchfrid, the son of Oswio. When Tuda died, Wilfrid was chosen to succeed him in the bishopric of York, and was sent by the two princes into Gaul to be consecrated by his friend Agilberct, bishop of Paris. Whether it was that during his absence the quarrel arose between Oswio and his son, or that the party of the Scottish missionaries had acquired the ascendency, as is intimated by Eddius, Wilfrid, at his return, found Ceadda in possession of the episcopal dignity, and retired peacefully to his monastery at Rippon. But Theodore of Canterbury restored Wilfrid, and translated Ceadda to Lichfield. Oswio acquiesced in the decision of the metropolitan, and the bishop enjoyed for several years his friendship, and that of his successor Egfrid *.

Egfrid's first wife was Edilthryda, the daughter of Anna king of the East-Angles, and widow of Tondberct, ealdorman of the Girvii. At an early period in life she had bound herself by a vow of virginity, which was respected by the piety or indifference of her husband. At his death she was demanded by Oswio for his son Egfrid, a youth of only fourteen years: and in spite of her remonstrances was conducted by her relations to the court of Northumbria. She persisted in her former resolution; and Egfrid, when he ascended the throne, referred the matter to the decision of Wilfrid, having previously offered him a valuable present if he could prevail on Edilthryda to renounce her early vow. The prelate however disappointed his hopes: the princess took the veil at Coldingham; and the friendship between Wilfrid and Egfrid was considerably impaired. The king now

* Edd. i—xv. Bed. iii. 28; iv. 3; v. 19.

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married Ermenburga, a princess, the violence of whose character excited the discontent of the people, and the remonstrances of the bishop. The freedom of his admonitions mortified her pride, and she found in her husband the willing minister of her vengeance *.

In the exercise of his authority archbishop Theodore was always severe, occasionally despotic. He had already deposed three of the Saxon prelates; and Wilfrid
A. D. 678. was destined to experience the same fate. At the solicitation of Egfrid and Ermenburga, he came to Northumbria, divided the ample diocese of York into three portions; and consecrated three new prelates, one for Bernicia, a second for Deira, and a third for the Lindiswaras. But Wilfrid did not submit in silence. He complained that he had been deprived without notice or accusation; and, with the advice of his episcopal colleagues, appealed to the equity of the sovereign pontiff. The appeal was admitted. The injured prelate prosecuted it in person: Cænwald, a monk, appeared as the advocate of Theodore. After a patient hearing, pope Agatho decided that Wilfrid should be restored to his former bishopric; but that he should select three proper persons out of his own clergy, should ordain them bishops, and divide among them the more distant parts of his diocese †.

Egfrid and Ermenburga had made several fruitless attempts to intercept the prelate on his journey: at
A. D. 680. his return they threw him into prison, and during nine months endeavoured, by the alternate employment of lenity and rigour, of promises and threats, to extort a confession that the papal rescript had been procured by bribery, or falsified by his contrivance. Wearied at last with his constancy, and harassed by the importunities of the abbess Ebba, they consented to his enlargement, but on the condition that he should bind himself by an oath never more to set his foot within the dominions of

* Bed. iv. 19. Edd. xxiv. † Edd. xxiv—xxxi. Bed. iv. 12; v. 19.

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Egfrid. Wilfrid retired into Mercia. From Mercia he was driven by the intrigues of his persecutors into Wessex; and from Wessex was compelled to seek an asylum among the pagans of Sussex. Edilwalch their king took him under his protection; and the exile repaid the benefit by diffusing among his subjects the doctrines of the gospel. The South-Saxons were the last people of the octarchy who embraced Christianity *

Though the royal families of Northumbria and Mercia were allied by marriage, their union had been broken by the ambition of Egfrid. The hostile armies met on the Trent; their valour was wasted in a dubious conflict; and peace was restored by the paternal exhortations of Theodore. Ælfwin, the brother of Egfrid, had fallen in the battle; and, as the honour of the king compelled him to demand compensation, he was persuaded to accept the legal *were* instead of prolonging hostilities for the uncertain purpose of vengeance †. Afterwards, in the year preceding his death, he despatched Beorht, a warlike and sanguinary chieftain, to ravage the coast of Ireland. Of the motives for this expedition we are not informed. Bede assures us that the Irish were a harmless and friendly people. To them many of the Angles had been accustomed to resort in search of knowledge, and on all occasions had been received kindly, and supported gratuitously. Beorht requited their hospitality by ravaging their country, and burning their towns, churches, and monasteries. The natives, unable to repel the invader by force, implored on the author of their wrongs the vengeance of heaven; and their imprecations were believed to be fulfilled in the following year by the unfortunate death of Egfrid. Against the advice of his council the king led an army into the territory of the Picts. Brude, the Pictish king, prudently retired before a superior enemy, till his pursuers had entangled themselves in the defiles

A. D. 679.

A. D. 685.

* Edd xxxiii—xl. Bed. iv. 13; v. 19. † Edd. xxiii. Bed. iv. 21.

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of the mountains. At Drumnechtan was fought a battle, which proved most fatal to the Northumbrians: few escaped from the slaughter; Egfrid himself was found on the field by the conquerors, and honourably interred in the royal cemetery in the isle of Hii. The Picts and Scots, and some tribes of the Britons, took advantage of this opportunity to recover their independence: Trumwin, whom Egfrid had appointed bishop at Abercorn, fled with his clergy into the south; and of the Saxon settlers all, who had not the good fortune to make a precipitate escape, were put to the sword, or consigned to perpetual slavery *.

Egfrid had left no issue by Ermenburga; and the Northumbrian thanes offered the crown to Aldfrid, the reputed but illegitimate son of Oswio. During the last reign he had retired to the western isles, and had devoted the time of his exile to study under the instruction of the Scottish monks. His proficiency obtained for him from his contemporaries the title of the learned king. Though his pacific disposition, and diminished power, did not permit him to assume the superiority which had been possessed by several of his predecessors, he reigned respected by his neighbours, beloved by his subjects, and praised by the learned whom he patronized. If he conducted in person any military expedition, it has escaped the notice of historians: but the celebrated Beorht, by his order or with his permission, attempted to obliterate the disgrace, which the late defeat had brought on the Northumbrian arms; and, like the unfortunate Egfrid, lost in the attempt both his life and his army †.

In the second year of his reign, Aldfrid, at the recommendation of archbishop Theodore, had restored Wilfrid to his bishopric and possessions. The reconciliation was not lasting. The prelates who had been expelled by the restoration of Wilfrid, acquired the confidence of

* Bed. iii. 27; iv. 26. Edd. xliii. Chron. Sax. 45. Sim. Dun. Hist. ecc. Dun. p. 48.

† Bed. v. 24.

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the king; Brihtwald, the successor of Theodore, was induced to favour their cause; and the persecuted bishop was compelled to appeal a second time to the justice of Rome. He returned with a papal testimonial of his innocence: but Aldfrid refused to receive him, and he sheltered himself under the protection of Coenred of Mercia. Aldfrid died in 705; and in his last moments regretted his treatment of Wilfrid, and bequeathed to his successor the charge of doing justice to the injured prelate. A compromise, satisfactory to all parties, was effected in the course of the same year*.

Hitherto the actions and abilities of the Northumbrian princes have demanded a more ample space; a few pages may suffice for the history of their successors, which will present nothing to the reader but one continued scene of perfidy, treason, and murder. At the death of Aldfrid, his son Osred was eight years old. The ealdorman Eadulf usurped the sceptre, and besieged the royal infant in Bamborough: but the people espoused the cause of Osred, and the usurper, after a tumultuous reign of two months, paid the forfeit of his treason. Berctfrid assumed the guardianship of the king, and chastised the incursions of the Picts in a bloody battle fought near the wall. But Osred soon emancipated himself from the restraint of his tutor; and the ungovernable youth was slain in his nineteenth year on the banks of Winandermere, in an attempt to suppress a dangerous insurrection headed by his kinsmen, the two brothers Cœnred and Osric. Cœnred possessed the throne two years, Osric eleven, at whose death it descended to Ceolwulf the brother of his predecessor. The learning and piety of Ceolwulf are attested by venerable Bede: but he possessed neither the vigour nor the authority requisite for his station. In the second year of his reign, he was seized, shorn, and shut up in a monastery. From this confinement he escaped, re-ascended the throne, and learned amid the

A. D. 701.

A. D. 716.

A. D. 731.

* Bed. v. 19. Edd. xlii—lviii.

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splendid cares of royalty to regret the tranquillity which he had reluctantly possessed in the cloister. After a reign of eight years, he voluntarily resigned the sceptre, and embraced the monastic profession at Lindisfarne *. He was succeeded by his cousin Eadbert, who during a reign of one-and-twenty years enlarged the territory, and revived for a while the ancient glory, of the Northumbrians. The Picts and Mercians felt the superiority of his arms: and with the assistance of
A. D. Ouengus, the Pictish king, he took Dunbarton from
756. the Britons, and added Cyil to his dominions. In his old age he imitated his predecessor, and received the
A. D. tonsure among the clergy of the church of York, of
758. which his brother Egbert was the archbishop. His retreat by some writers is attributed to compulsion; others assign it to the impression made on his mind, by comparing the violent deaths of two contemporary princes with the peaceful exit of Ceolwulf †. Oswulf, the son of Eadbert, was slain by a conspiracy of his thanes soon after his accession; and the sceptre by the suffrage of the people was placed in the hands of Edilwold, a noble Northumbrian. But the descendants of Ida, who claimed it as the right of their family, considered him an usurper. The death of Oswin, his prin-
A. D. cipal opponent, who fell in a battle which lasted three
761. days in the vicinity of Melrose (Aug. 6), seemed to confirm him on the throne: but after a troublesome reign of six years he resigned, in an assembly of the witan at Finchley, in favour of Alchred, a prince of the line of Ida ‡. The inconstancy of the Northumbrian thanes was fatal to the ambition of their monarchs. Alchred, abandoned by those who had placed him on the throne, fled for protection to Kennet king of the
A. D. Picts, and was succeeded by Ethelred, the son of Edil-
774. wold, of whom we know only, that in the fifth year of his reign, his army was twice defeated by two rebel ealdormen Ethelwald and Heardbert, and that the loss

* Mailros, 136. Sim. Dun. 100.
† Auct. Bed. p. 224. Sim. Dun. 105. Hunt. 196.
‡ Sim. Dun. p. 106. Auct. Bed. 224.

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of his three principal captains induced him to fly, and leave the sceptre to Alfwold the son of Oswulf*. Alfwold's reign was as tumultuous as those of his predecessors. Beorn his principal minister was burnt to death in Silton by a party of thanes, whose enmity he had incurred by the equity of his administration; and the king himself, whose virtue was not a match for the ferocity of his subjects, was slain by the ealdorman Sigan. The murderer, five years later, perished by his own sword †. Osred, the son of Alchred, attempted to seize the crown: but the thanes recalled the exiled Ethelred, and the late claimant, to save his life, enrolled himself among the clergy of York, and afterwards for greater security fled to the isle of Man. Ethelred returned with the thirst of revenge. He ordered Eardulf, one of his most powerful opponents, to be slain at the door of the church of Rippon. The monks carried the body into the choir. During the funeral service it was observed to breathe, proper remedies were applied to the wounds, and the future king of Northumbria was carefully concealed in the monastery. The fate of Elf and Elwin, the two sons of Alfwold, was more deplorable. They had fled to the sanctuary at York; were drawn by deceitful promises from their asylum; and paid with their lives the price of their credulity. Osred now returned from the isle of Man, and braved his rival to battle, but he was deserted by his followers, and added another to the victims of Ethelred's ambition. That prince, however, was hastening to the close of his bloody career. In his third year the total failure of the harvest had reduced the inhabitants to the extremity of distress; and to famine were soon added the ravages of pestilence. At that moment, to complete their misfortunes, an army of Danes landing on the coast, pillaged the country, and destroyed the venerable church of Lindisfarne, the former residence of the apostle of the Northumbrians. Both the ca-

A. D. 780

A. D. 790

A. D. 792.

A. D. 793.

* Chron. Sax. 62. Sim. Dun. 107, 108. Malmes. 138.
† Chron. Sax. 62. 64. Malmes. 139.

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lamities of nature, and the cruelties of this unknown enemy, were attributed to the imprudence or the bad
A. D. 796. fortune of Ethelred; and he fell in a fruitless attempt to quell the rising discontent of his subjects*. The sceptre stained with the blood of so many princes was next grasped by Osbald: but it dropped from his hands at the end of twenty-seven days, and Eardulf, whose life had been saved by the monks of Rippon, ascended the throne. Osbald prudently retired to the cloister, where he enjoyed a tranquillity unknown to his more successful competitor. Eardulf was compelled to fight against the murderers of Ethelred, and defeated them in a sanguinary conflict at Billinghow near Whal-
A. D. 798. ley (April 2). They found a powerful protector in Cenulf, king of Mercia. The two kings advanced against each other at the head of their respective armies: but a reconciliation was effected by the interposition of the prelates; and they swore eternal friendship to each other. Yet Eardulf was afterwards surprised by his
A. D. 806. enemies, and put into close custody. These numerous and bloody revolutions had excited the notice of foreign nations. Charlemagne pronounced the Northumbrians more perfidious than the very pagans†; and by a special messenger sought and obtained the liberation of the captive from the hands of his sanguinary subjects. There is reason to think that the opponents of Eardulf had consented to commit the decision of their quarrel to the equity of the pontiff Leo III.‡ The king himself, after paying a visit to the emperor at Noyon, repaired to Rome, where a messenger from Eanbald, archbishop of York, had already arrived. That prelate, the ealderman Wado, and Cenulf of Mercia, were believed by Leo to be the secret authors of the rebellion. In the beginning of 809 Eardulf left Rome, accompanied

* Chron. Sax. 64, 65. Malms. 139. Sim. Dun. 110—113.

† Gentem perfidam et perversam, pejorem paganis. Malms. 26.

‡ So I infer from the fact, that Leo was careful to preserve their letters to him even after the restoration of Eardulf, and to preserve them *pro pignore*. See his letter in Bouquet, v. 604.

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by Aldulf the papal legate, and by the messenger of Eanbald, to whom Charlemagne, in order to manifest the interest which he took in the affair, added Rotfrid, abbot of St. Amand, and Nanther, abbot of St. Omer. With this honourable escort he arrived in Northumbria; all opposition vanished before the papal and imperial envoys; and the deposed king was unanimously restored to his throne *. How long he continued to reign is uncertain. A. D. 809.

It is unnecessary to pursue farther the history of these princes. During the last century Northumbria had exhibited successive instances of treachery and murder, to which no other country perhaps can furnish a parallel. Within the lapse of one hundred years fourteen kings had assumed the sceptre: and yet of all these one only, if one, died in the peaceable possession of royalty. Seven had been slain, six had been driven from the throne by their rebellious subjects. After Eardulf, the same anarchy and perfidy prevailed, till the Danes totally extinguished the Northumbrian dynasty, by the slaughter of Ella and Osbriht in the year 867.

From these worthless princes, the votaries and victims of their ambition, the mind will turn with pleasure to two very different characters, who, in a more humble station, became the benefactors of their age and country. These were Bede and Alcuin, Northumbrian scholars, whose literary superiority was acknowledged by their contemporaries, and to whose writings and exertions Europe was principally indebted for that portion of learning, which she possessed from the eighth to the eleventh century. Bede was born at Sunderland, and was intrusted in his childhood to the care of the monks of Jarrow, a convent on the right bank of the Tyne. In that seminary he spent sixty-two years, devoting, according to his assertion, the whole of his time either to his own improvement or to the improvement of others He had studied every science which sur-

* Le Cointe, Ann. eccl. Franc. p. 102. Annal. Bened. tom. ii. p. 383. Bouquet, Rer. Gallic. tom. v. p. 72, 255. 333. 355. 602.

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vived the ruin of the Roman empire ; and if the reader look into his writings, he will be astonished at the depth and the variety of his attainments. Of his works the most valuable is the "Ecclesiastical History of the Nation of the Angles," which while it treats professedly of the establishment of Christianity in the different Saxon kingdoms, incidentally contains almost all that we know of the history of the more early princes. This learned monk died at Jarrow in 733. His works were quickly transcribed, and dispersed among the nations of Europe: and the applause with which they were received induced the Anglo-Saxons to consider him as the ornament and pride of their nation *.

Alcuin was a native of York, or its neighbourhood. By archbishop Egbert he was appointed master of the great school in the archiepiscopal city. His reputation attracted crowds of students from Gaul and Germany to his lectures, and recommended him to the notice of the emperor Charlemagne. He accepted the invitation of that prince to reside in his court; diffused a taste for learning through all the provinces of the empire; and numbered the most distinguished prelates and ministers among his scholars. When, in his old age, he retired from the distractions of the palace, many followed him to his retreat at Tours, where he continued his favourite occupation of teaching till his death in the commencement of the ninth century. His works are numerous. They consist principally of poems, elementary introductions to the different sciences, treatises on a variety of theological subjects, and an interesting correspondence with the most celebrated characters of the age †.

* Et rectum quidem mihi videtur, says the abbot Cuthbert, ut tota gens Anglorum in omnibus provinciis, ubicumque reperti sunt, gratias Deo referant, quia tam mirabilem virum illis in sua natione donavit. Ep. St. Bonif. p. 124.

† The Anglo-Saxon converts were indebted for the little learning they acquired to their missionaries: and hence for some time those in the north repaired for instruction principally to Ireland, those in the south to the Roman teachers at Canterbury. This produced a kind of literary rivalship between the two islands, of which an amusing account is given by Aldhelm, who had studied first under Irish, and then under Roman

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MERCIA.

In the preceding pages the reader will have noticed the accession of Wulphere to the throne of Mercia, and his frequent and not inglorious struggles against the power of the Northumbrians. With equal spirit, and eventually with greater success, he opposed his southern rivals, the kings of Wessex. In the first conflict the chance of war made Wulphere the prisoner of Coinwalch, but with the recovery of his liberty he obliterated the disgrace of his defeat. At the battle of Pontisbury the forces of Wessex were dispersed; the victors ravaged the country of their enemies; and the Wihtwaras, the inhabitants of the isle of Wight, submitted to the dominion of Wulphere *. That prince was now the most powerful of the kings on the south of the Humber; and he employed his authority in promoting the diffusion of Christianity among his dependents. Idolatry disappeared in Mercia: the natives of Essex, who, during the pestilence, had returned to the worship of Woden, were reclaimed by the preaching of the bishop Jarumnan; and Edilwalch, king of Sussex, at the persuasion of Wulphere, professed himself a Christian. On the day of his baptism, he received from the munificence of his royal god-father the sovereignty of the isle of Wight, and of the territory of the Meanwaras, a district comprehending almost the eastern moiety of Hampshire. Wilfrid, who had been driven into exile by the resentment of Ermenburga, improved the opportunity to establish the belief of the gospel in the kingdom of Sussex, and Edilwalch rewarded his zeal with the donation of the isle of Selsey,

A. D. 661.

masters. In his letter to Eadfrid, who had just returned from Ireland, he gives due praise to the learning of the Irish scholars; but then he observes that England too has its share, that Theodore and Adrian shine like the sun and moon at Canterbury, and that the former is surrounded with scholars even from Ireland. Theodorus summi sacerdotii gubernacula regens, Hibernensium globo discipulorum stipatur. Usser, syllog. ep. p. 38. See also O'Conor, prol. xix.

* This appears the most plausible manner of reconciling Ethelwerd (p. 476) with the Saxon Chronicle (p. 39) and Bede (iv. 13.)

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containing eighty-seven hides of land, and two hundred and fifty slaves. They were baptized, and immediately received their freedom from the piety of the bishop *.

The power of Wulphere declined as rapidly as it had risen. Towards the end of his reign, he was defeated by the Northumbrians, and lost the province of the Lindiswaras. The men of Wessex, who had borne his superiority with impatience, were encouraged by the victory of the Northumbrians to try again the fortune of war. Though the battle was not decisive, it contributed to break the power of Wulphere, at whose death Egfrid, A. D. 675. the Northumbrian monarch, over-ran and subjected the kingdom †.

Ethelred was the brother of Wulphere, and had married Osthryda, the sister of Egfrid. To this alliance he was perhaps indebted for the crown of Mercia. He led an army against Lothaire, king of Kent, burnt the A. D. 676. villages and churches, carried off the inhabitants, and destroyed the city of Rochester. He next demanded the province of the Lindiswaras from Egfrid: a war ensued: Ælfwin, the brother of the Northumbrian, was slain; and Ethelred, though he paid the *were* for the death of Ælfwin, recovered the possession of the disputed territory. For many years he reigned with honour: but the murder of his queen Osthryda by A. D. 697. the Suthenhymbre, the people between the Trent and the Humber, deeply affected his mind. He gave the government of the discontented district to his nephew A. D. 704. Coenred, the son of Wulphere; and at last abdicated the throne in his favour. He had children of his own: but they were of an immature age, and the nation preferred a successor of approved judgment and in the vigour of manhood. Ethelred then took the monastic vows in the monastery of Bardeney, was raised to the office of abbot, and died at an advanced age in 716 ‡.

* Bed. iii. 30: iv. 13. Edd. Vit. Wilf. xl. † Chron. Sax. p. 41. Edd. xx.
‡ Bed. iv. 12. 21; v. 19. Chron. Sax. 44. 49. Flo: ad an. 716. Chron Pet. de Burg. p. 6.

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Cœnred was a prince whose piety and love of peace are loudly applauded by our ancient chroniclers: but whose short reign of five years affords only a barren theme to the historian. As soon as Ceolred, the son of the preceding monarch, was of an age to wield the sceptre, Cœnred resigned the crown, and travelling to Rome, received the monastic habit from the hands of pope Constantine. Offa, the son of Sighere, king of Essex, was the companion of his pilgrimage, and the imitator of his virtues *. A. D. 709.

The reign of Ceolred was almost as tranquil as that of his predecessor. Once only had he recourse to the fortune of arms, against Ina, king of Wessex. The battle was fought at Wodensbury; and the victory was claimed by each nation. But Ceolred degenerated from the piety of his fathers, and by the licentiousness of his morals alienated the minds of the Mercians. In the eighth year of his reign, as he sat at table with his thanes, he suddenly lost his reason, and shortly after expired in the most excruciating torment †. A. D. 715.

Contemporary with Ceolred was Ethelbald, a descendant of Alwin, the brother of Penda. He was in the vigour of youth, graceful in his person, ambitious of power, and immoderate in his pleasures. To avoid the jealousy of Ceolred, by whom he was considered a rival, Ethelbald had concealed himself among the marshes of Croyland, where he was hospitably entertained by Guthlake, the celebrated hermit. As soon as he had learned the death of his persecutor, he issued from his retreat; assumed the sceptre without opposition; and afterwards, to testify his gratitude for his former benefactor, raised a magnificent church and monastery over the tomb of Guthlake ‡. The character of Ethelbald was a compound of vice and virtue. He was liberal to the poor and to his dependents; he watched with solicitude over

* Bed. v. 19.
† Chron. Sax. p. 50, 51. Ep. St. Bonif. apud Spelm. p. 225.
‡ Ingul. p. 2. To construct the building, Ethelbald gave 300 pounds of silver the first year, and 100 pounds a year for the ten following years, p. 3.

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the administration of justice; and he severely repressed the hereditary feuds, which divided the Mercian thanes, and impaired the strength of the nation. Yet in his own favour he never scrupled to invade the rights of his subjects; and that no restraint might be imposed upon his pleasures, he refused to shackle himself with the obligations of marriage. The noblest families were disgraced, the sanctity of the cloister was profaned by his amours. The report of his immorality reached the ears of the missionary, St. Boniface, who from the heart of Germany wrote to him a letter of most earnest expostulation *. What influence it had on his conduct, is not mentioned: but he soon afterwards attended a synod, held by archbishop Cuthbert for the reformation of manners; and long before his death, forsook the follies and vices of his youth.

Of the kings who had hitherto swayed the Mercian sceptre, Ethelbald was the most powerful. From the Humber to the southern channel, he compelled every tribe to obey his authority: but he seems to have respected the power or the abilities of the Northumbrian monarchs: and, if he ventured twice to invade their territories, it was at times when they were engaged in the north against the Picts, and when the spoils which he obtained were dearly purchased by the infamy of the aggression †. In the south the kings of Wessex struggled with impatience against his ascendency, but every effort appeared only to rivet their chains. They were compelled to serve him as vassals, and to fight the battles of their lord. At length, in 752, Cuthred undertook to emancipate himself and his country, and boldly opposed the Mercians in the field of Burford in Oxfordshire. In the open space between the two armies, Edilhun, who bore the golden dragon, the banner of Wessex, slew

* Ep. St. Bonif. apud Spelm. p. 225.

† Bed. v. 23. In his charters he calls himself Rex Britanniæ, and Rex non solum Merciorum sed et omnium provinciarum, quæ generali nomine Sutangli dicuntur. Smith's Bed. app. p. 786. Hunt. 195. Chron. Sax. 54.

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with his own hand the standard-bearer of Ethelbald; and his countrymen hailed as the omen of victory the valour of their champion. An ancient poet has described in striking language the shock of the two armies; the shouts and efforts of the combatants, their murderous weapons, the spear, the long sword, and the battle-axe, and their prodigality of life in the defence of their respective standards. Chance at length conducted Ethelbald to the advance of Edilhun: but the king of Mercia shrunk before the gigantic stature and bloody brand of his adversary, and gave to his followers the example of a precipitate flight. This defeat abolished for a time the superiority of Mercia *.

Ethelbald did not long survive his disgrace. Beornred, a noble Mercian, aspired to the throne, and a battle was fought on the hill of Seggeswold in Warwickshire. A. D. 757
The king either fell in the engagement, or was killed by his own guards on the following night. His body was buried in the monastery of Repandune †.

The death of Ethelbald transferred the momentary possession of the crown to Beornred: but the thanes espoused the interests of Offa, a prince of royal descent; and the usurper, at the end of a few months, was defeated in battle, and driven out of Mercia. Of the reign of the new monarch the first fourteen years were employed in the subjugation of his domestic enemies, and the consolidation of his own power, objects which he was unable to effect without the effusion of much blood ‡. In 771 he first appeared in the character of a conqueror, and subdued the Hestingi, a people inhabiting the coast of Sussex §. Three years afterwards, he invaded Kent, routed the natives at Otford, and stained

* Hunt. 195. West. ad ann. 755.
† Ingul. p. 5. Auct. Bed. p. 224. Sim. Dun. p. 105. Malm. f. 14.
‡ Ep. Alcuini apud Malm. p. 33. Lel. Collect. i. 402.
§ Mail. p. 138. Sim. Dun. p. 107. The Hestingi have been sought in every part of the island. A charter in Dublet fixes them in Sussex. By it Offa confirms a grant of land in the neighbourhood of Hastings to the abbey of St. Denis, and styles Bertwald, the proprietor of Hastings and Pevensey, his *fidelis*. Apud Alford, ad ann. 790

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the waters of the Darent with the blood of the fugitives*. From the more feeble, he turned his arms
A.D. against the more powerful states. He entered Oxford-
777. shire, which then belonged to Wessex; Cynewulf, the West-Saxon monarch, fled before him; Bensignton, a royal residence, was taken; and the territory on the left bank of the Thames became the reward of the conqueror†. The Britons were next the victims of his ambition. The kings of Powis were driven from Shrewsbury beyond the Wye; the country between that river and the Severn was planted with colonies of Saxons; and a trench and rampart, stretching over a space of one hundred miles from the mouth of the Wye to the estuary of the Dee, separated the subjects of Offa from the incursions of their vindictive neighbours‡. The Northumbrians also, but in what year is uncertain, were compelled to own the superiority of the Mercian§.

The chair of St. Peter was filled at this period by Adrian, the friend and favourite of Charlemagne. In 785 two papal legates, the bishops of Ostia and Tudertum, accompanied by an envoy from the French monarch, landed in England; and convoked two synods, the one in Northumbria, the other in Mercia. In the latter, which was attended by Offa, and by all the princes and prelates on the south of the Humber, the legates read a code of ecclesiastical laws composed by the pontiff for the reformation of the Anglo-Saxon church. It was heard with respect, and subscribed by all the members‖. The ambition of Offa did not omit the opportunity of attempting a project, which he had long meditated. Jaenbercht, archbishop of Canterbury, had formerly offended the king, and had been deprived

* Chron. Sax. 61. Mail. 138.
† Chron. Sax. 61. Mail. 138. Ethel. 477.
‡ Wise's Asser. p. 10. Sim. Dun. p. 118. Caradoc. p. 20. Langhorn, p. 292.
§ West. 142. Offa, in a charter, dated 780, styles himself Rex Merciorum simulque aliarum circumquaque nationum. Smith Bed. app. p. 767.
‖ Chron. Sax. 64. Wilk. Con. tom. i. p. 151.

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by him of all the manors which belonged to his see in the Mercian territories. From the man, the enmity of Offa was transferred to the church over which he presided. Why, the king asked, should the Mercian prelates be subjected to the jurisdiction of a Kentish bishop? Why should the most powerful of the Saxon kingdoms be without a national metropolitan? According to his wishes a proposition was made in the synod, that the jurisdiction of the see of Canterbury should be confined to the three kingdoms of Kent, Sussex, and Wessex; that one of the Mercian bishops should be raised to the archiepiscopal rank; and that all the prelates between the Thames and the Humber should be subject to his authority. Jaenbercht did not acquiesce without a struggle in the degradation of his church; but the influence of Offa was irresistible; and Higebert of Lichfield was selected to be the new metropolitan *. Still it was necessary to procure the papal approbation. The messengers of Offa urged the great extent of the province of Canterbury, and the propriety of appointing a native metropolitan to preside over the churches of so powerful a kingdom as Mercia: the advocates of Jaenbercht alleged the letters of former pontiffs, the prescription of two centuries, and the injustice of depriving an innocent prelate of more than one half of his jurisdiction. Adrian assented to the wishes of the king: the pallium with the archiepiscopal dignity was conferred upon Adulph, the successor of Higebert, in the see of Lichfield; and Jaenbercht was compelled to content himself with the obedience of the bishops of Rochester, London, Selsey, Winchester, and Sherburne †.

Before the conclusion of the council, Egferth, the son of Offa, was solemnly crowned, and from that period,

* Malm. f. 15. Wilk. Con. p. 152. 164. It was, says the Saxon chronicle, a "geflitfullic (quarrelsome) synod," p. 63. The situation of Calcuith or Calcythe, where it was held, is disputed. I suspect it to be Chelsey, which was called Chelcethe as late as the end of the fifteenth century. Lel. Col. iv. 250.

† Ang. Sax. i. 460. Malms. f. 15. Spel. Con. 302

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reigned conjointly with his father. At the same time the king delivered into the hands of the legates a charter, in which he bound himself by oath, and promised for his successors, to send annually the sum of three hundred and sixty-five mancuses to the church of St. Peter, in Rome, to be employed partly in defraying the expenses of the public worship, partly in the support of indigent pilgrims *.

Alcuin, the Anglo-Saxon preceptor of Charlemagne, had been instrumental in opening an epistolary correspondence between his royal pupil and the king of Mercia †. From the letters which are still extant, it appears that several of the thanes, who had opposed the succession of Offa, finding it unsafe to remain in England, had sought an asylum upon the continent. The humanity of Charlemagne refused to abandon them to the resentment of their enemy. Those, who asserted their innocence, he sent to Rome to exculpate themselves before the pope: the others he retained under his protection, not, as he said, to encourage them in their rebellion, but with the hope that time might soften the resentment of Offa, and that the fugitives might be received into favour. Once he intrusted some of them to the faith of Ethelheard, the successor of Jaenbercht in the see of Canterbury: but on the express condition that he should send them back to France in safety, unless Offa should give the most solemn assurances, that he would pardon their offences ‡. Another subject of dis-

* Ang. Sax. i. 461. Chron. Sax. p. 64. Huntingdon (f. 197) says, Egferth was crowned king of Kent: but in this he differs from all other historians.—The mancus was equal to thirty pennies.

† In his letters Charles gives himself the sounding title of "the most powerful of the Christian kings of the east;" and at the same time to sooth the vanity of Offa, calls him "the most powerful of the Christian kings of the west." Ep. Car. Mag. apud Bouquet, tom. v. p. 620.

‡ The letter to Ethelheard is so honourable to Charlemagne, that I shall offer no apology for transcribing a part of it. Hos miseros patriæ suæ exules vestræ direximus pietati, deprecantes, ut pro ipsis intercedere dignemini apud fratrem meum carissimum Offanum regem.—His si pacem precari valeatis, remaneant in patria. Sin vero durius de illis frater meus respondeat, illos ad nos remittite illæsos. Melius est enim peregrinare quam perire, in aliena servire patria quam in sua mori. Confido de

cussion regarded the mercantile interests of the two nations. It was complained that the avarice of the English manufacturers had induced them to contract the size of the woollen gowns, which they exported to the continent; and the vigilance of the French had detected several adventurers, who, under the disguise of pilgrims, had attempted to impose on the officers of the customs*. These points were amicably arranged: but a new occurrence interrupted for a time that harmony, which had subsisted for so many years. Charlemagne, as a proof of his friendship, had proposed a marriage between his illegitimate son Charles and a daughter of Offa. The Mercian, as the price of his consent, demanded a French princess for his son Egferth. If we reflect that the two monarchs had hitherto treated each other on the footing of perfect equality, there will not appear anything peculiarly offensive in such a demand. Yet it wounded the pride of Charlemagne; he broke off all communication with the Mercian court; and the trade with the English merchants experienced the most rigorous prohibitions. But Gerwold, the collector of the customs, whose interests probably suffered from this interruption of commerce, contrived to pacify his sovereign; and Alcuin, who was commissioned to negociate with the Mercian, succeeded in restoring the relations of amity between the two courts †.

The most powerful of the Saxon princes were ambitious of an alliance with the family of Offa. Brihtric and Ethelred, the kings of Wessex and Northumbria, had already married his daughters Eadburga and Elfleda; and Ethelbert, the young king of the East-Angles, was a suitor for the hand of their sister, Etheldrida. This amiable and accomplished prince (so he is described)

bonitate fratris mei, si obnixe pro illis intercedatis, ut benigne suscipiat eos, pro nostro amore, vel magis pro Christi charitate, qui dixit, remittite et remittetur vobis. Int. epist. Alcuini, ep. 61.

* Malms. f. 17. Lel. Collec. i. 402. Wilk. Con. i. 158. Bouquet, v. 627.

† Chron. Fontanellen. c. xv. apud Bouquet, v. 315. Epist. Alc. ad Colc. ibid. p. 607.

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A.D. 792. by the advice of his council proceeded with a numerous train to Mercia. On the confines he halted, and sent forward a messenger with presents and a letter, announcing the object of his intended visit. A kind invitation was returned, accompanied with a promise of security. At his arrival he was received with the attention becoming his dignity, and expressions of affection most flattering to his hopes. The day was spent in feasting and merriment: in the evening Ethelbert retired to his apartment: but shortly afterwards was invited by Wimbert, an officer of the palace, to visit Offa, who wished to confer with him on matters of importance. The unsuspecting prince, as he followed his guide through a dark passage, was surrounded by ruffians, and deprived of life. At the news, his attendants mounted their horses and fled: Etheldrida, disappointed in her expectations of worldly happiness, retired from court, and lived a recluse in the abbey of Croyland; and Offa, shut up in his closet, affected, by external demonstrations of grief, to persuade the world of his innocence. Gratitude to the founder of his abbey has induced the monk of St. Albans to transfer the whole guilt from the king to his consort Cynedrida: by every other ancient writer, though she is said to have suggested, he is represented as having sanctioned, the foul deed; and, if it be true that he immediately annexed East-Anglia to his own dominions, little doubt can be entertained that the man, who reaped the advantage, had directed the execution of the murder*.

Offa honoured the memory of the prince, whose blood he had shed, by erecting a stately tomb over his remains, and bestowing rich donations on the church of Hereford, in which they reposed. About the same time he

* Westminster is merely the copyist of the monk of St. Albans, who, besides confining the guilt to the queen, makes Ethelbert sink through a trap-door into a cave, where he was despatched. Vit. Off. ii. p. 980. Wallingford (p. 530), on some ancient authority, describes him as falling in battle. Occidit in campestri indicto bello. See Chron. Sax. 65. Malm. 15. Ethelw. 477. Asser. Ann. 154, Brompton, 749–752.

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endowed the magnificent abbey of St. Albans. But his heart was corroded by remorse, and his body enfeebled by disease. Within two years he followed Ethelbert to the grave (Aug. 10), and was buried near Bedford, in a chapel on the banks of the Ouse. It was a tradition of the neighbourhood, that, a few years afterwards, the river overflowed, and that his bones were carried away by the inundation *.

Egferth, who had been crowned nine years before, succeeded his father. The ancient writers indulge in reflections on the misfortunes of a family, the establishment of which had cost its founder so many crimes. Egferth died without issue after he had possessed the crown one hundred and forty-one days. Of his sisters, Elfleda became a widow soon after her marriage, Eadburga died in poverty and exile in Italy, and Edilthrida finished her days in seclusion at Croyland. Within a few years after the murder of Ethelbert, Offa and his race had disappeared for ever †.

The throne of Mercia was next filled by Cenulf, descended from another of the brothers of Penda. At the commencement of his reign, a singular revolution A. D. in Kent directed his attention to that kingdom. By 796. the death of Alurie the race of Hengist became extinct: and the prospect of a throne awakened the ambition of several competitors. The successful candidate was a clergyman related to the descendants of Cerdic, Eadbert Pren, whose aspiring mind preferred the crown to the tonsure ‡. Ethelheard, the archbishop of Canterbury, beheld with sorrow his elevation: but if *he* treated Eadbert as an apostate, Eadbert considered *him* as a rebel; and the metropolitan, unable to maintain the

* I have not mentioned Offa's pretended journey to Rome: for it could not have escaped the notice of every historian before the fabulous monk of St. Albans. The institution of the Romescot, is attributed to him by Huntingdon: I suspect that writer has confounded it with the annual donation of 365 mancuses already mentioned.

† Ing. p. 6.

‡ Hunting. f. 197. Wallingford says that he was brother to Ethelred the eldest son of Withred, p. 530

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discipline of the canons, consulted the Roman pontiff, Leo III., who, after mature deliberation, excommunicated the king, and threatened, that, if he did not return to the clerical profession, he would exhort all the inhabitants of Britain to unite in punishing his disobedience *. Cenulf took this office on himself: and Eadbert, convinced that resistance would be vain, endeavoured to elude the vigilance and revenge of his enemies. He was, however, taken: the eyes of the captive were put out, and both his hands amputated. Cuthred, a creature of the victor's, obtained the throne, with the title, but without the authority, of king; and Eadbert was reserved by the Mercian for the gratification of his vanity. A day had been appointed for the dedication of the church of Winchelcomb, which he had built with royal magnificence: the ceremony was attended by two kings, thirteen bishops, ten ealdormen, and an immense concourse of people; and in their presence Cenulf led his mutilated captive to the altar, and of his special grace and clemency granted him in the most solemn manner his freedom. According to the national custom, the parade of the day was concluded with the distribution of presents. To the kings, prelates, and ealdormen he gave horses, garments of silk, and vases of the precious metals, to each visitor of noble birth but without landed possessions a pound of silver, and to every monk and clergyman a smaller but proportionate sum †.

The next undertaking of Cenulf was an act of justice,—to restore to the successors of St. Augustin the prerogatives, of which they had been despoiled at the imperious demand of Offa. The authority of the new metropolitan had been endured with reluctance by the English prelates, his former equals; and the archbishops of Canterbury and York seized the first opportunity of conveying to the king the sentiments of the episcopal body. He

* Anglia Sacra, i. 460. In the pope's letter the name of the king is not mentioned: but all circumstances conspire to point out Eadbert.

† Monast. Angl. i. 189. Chron. Sax. 67. Sim. Dun. 114. Malm. 13. Walling. 530.

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acquiesced in their wishes: a letter in his name and that of the nobility and clergy was written to Leo III.; and Ethelheard proceeded to Rome to plead in person the rights of his church. A favourable answer was obtained; and Ethelheard, at his return, summoned a council of twelve bishops, in which it was declared that the decree of pope Adrian had been surreptitiously obtained; and the metropolitan of Lichfield was reduced to his former station among the suffragans of Canterbury *.

Archbishop Wulfrid was, like his predecessor, for some time the favourite of Cenulf †. With the origin of the subsequent dissension between them, we are unacquainted: but we find the king displaying the most violent hostility against the primate, and excluding him during six years from the exercise of the archiepiscopal authority. Both appealed to the holy see, and Wulfrid repaired to Rome, to vindicate his character from the charges of his royal persecutor. At his return Cenulf A. D. summoned him before a great council at London. "I 816
"require," said the king, "that you surrender to me
"and my heirs your manor of three hundred hides at
"Yongesham, and pay to me one hundred and twenty
"pounds of silver. If you refuse, I will drive you out of
"Britain, and no solicitation of the emperor, no com-
"mand of the pope, shall ever procure your return."
Wulfrid heard the menaces with firmness; and Cenulf shewed himself inflexible. After much altercation and many remonstrances, a compromise was effected by the interposition of the nobility and clergy. Wulfrid acquiesced in the king's demand: and Cenulf consented that the cession should be of no value, unless he wrote to the pope in favour of the archbishop, and restored him to all the privileges which his predecessors had enjoyed. But no sooner had he obtained possession of the manor and the money, than he laughed at the credulity of

* Wilk. con. 163. 167. Smith's Bed. app. p. 787. Malm. f. 15. Evid. eccl. Christ. 3212.
† Ing. p. 6.

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Wulfrid, who was compelled to submit in silence, and to wait for compensation from the justice of Cenulf's successor*.

After a prosperous reign of twenty-six years, the king was killed in an expedition against the East-Anglians. Notwithstanding his persecution of the archbishop, he is celebrated by our ancient writers for his piety no less than his courage and good fortune. He was succeeded by his only son Kenelm, a boy of seven years of age. After the lapse of a few months the young prince ac-
A. D. 819. companied his tutor Ascebert into a forest, where he was barbarously murdered. Suspicion attributed his death to his elder sister Quendrida, whose ambition, it was said, would have willingly purchased the crown with the blood of a brother. If such were her views, she was disappointed. Ceolwulf, her uncle, ascended the throne: but Quendrida succeeded to the patrimony of her father, and is frequently mentioned in the English councils with the titles of abbess, and heiress of Cenulf†.

The reign of Ceolwulf was short. In his second year he was dethroned by Beornwulf, a Mercian, who had no better title than his power and opulence. He obliged Quendrida to compound with Wulfrid for the land which her father had wrested from the archbishop. His abilities are said to have been unequal to his station, and he
A. D. was soon compelled to yield to the superior genius of
824. Egbert, king of Wessex‡.

WESSEX.

From the kings of Mercia it is time to return to the descendants of Cerdic, whose fortune or abilities, after a struggle of three hundred years, triumphed over every opponent, and united all the nations of the Anglo-Saxons in one great and powerful monarchy. The death of the bretwalda Ceawlin and the accession of his nephew

* Wilk. con. 172. 173. Spel. con. 332. Chron. Sax. 69.
† Ing. p. 7. Wilk. and Spel. ibid. Probably she was called abbess because Cenulf had left her the abbey of Winchelcomb. ‡ Ing. p. 7.

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Ceolric, have been already noticed. To Ceolric, after a short reign of five years, succeeded his brother Ceolwulf, whose enterprising spirit engaged him in constant hostilities with the Saxons, Britons, Scots, and Picts *. The men of Sussex made a bold but unsuccessful effort to recover their independence. The war was conducted with the most obstinate valour; and though Ceolwulf crushed his opponents, it was with the loss of his bravest warriors †. He next led a numerous army against the Britons, drove Mouric, their king, beyond the Severn, and penetrated to the banks of the Wye. The pride of the natives attributed their reverses not to the superiority of the conquerors, but to the incapacity of their leader. His father Tewdric, it was said, had never shewn his back to an enemy: were he to place himself at their head, the Saxons would not dare to appear in his presence. Tewdric had resigned the sceptre, and led the life of a hermit amidst the rocks of Dindyrn. From his cell he was drawn by the entreaties of his countrymen; and assumed with reluctance the command of the army. In the battle which followed, the hermit gained the victory, but lost his life. He received a wound in the head, of which he died near the confluence of the Wye and the Severn. Ceolwulf did not survive him more than a year ‡.

A. D. 607.

A. D. 610.

Ceolwulf was succeeded by Cynegils, the son of Ceolric, who divided the kingdom with his brother Cuichelm. This partition did not diminish the strength of the nation. The two brothers appeared to be animated with the same spirit, and united their efforts to promote the public prosperity. They led a powerful army to Bampton in Devonshire. The Britons fled at the martial appearance of the enemy; and the Saxons returning

A. D. 611.

* Chron. Sax. p. 23. Hunt. 181. † Ibid. p. 25. Hunt. 181.

‡ Usher de prim. p. 292. Langhorn, p. 148. As Tewdric was killed by pagans, the Britons styled him a martyr. Mathern, where he was buried, derived its name from the words Merthir Tewdric. When Bishop Godwin repaired his tomb, he found the bones entire, and the fracture of the skull apparently recent. God. de Præsul. p. 593.

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from the pursuit numbered two thousand and forty-six enemies among the slain *. The three sons of Saberct, who had succeeded to the kingdom of Essex, ventured to provoke the hostility of the two brothers; but they
A. D. 623. fell on the field of battle, and of their followers but few escaped to carry the intelligence to their countrymen *.

The character of Cuichelm is disgraced by the attempt of his messenger Eomer to assassinate Edwin,
A. D. 626. king of Northumbria. What peculiar provocation he might have received, it is in vain to conjecture: according to Malmsbury, he had been deprived of part of his territory. The silence of historians acquits Cynegils of any share in the guilt of his brother; but he was unwilling to see him fall a victim to the resentment of the Northumbrian, and assisted him with all his forces in a fruitless attempt to repel Edwin. Fortunately the conqueror was appeased, and left them in possession of their territories ‡.

Two years afterwards, Penda, who was then beginning his sanguinary career, determined to measure his strength with that of the West-Saxons. The obstinacy of the two armies prolonged the contest till it was interrupted by the darkness of night. The conflict was about to be renewed in the morning, when both parties, appalled by the loss of the preceding day, were induced by their mutual fears to listen to terms of reconciliation. The battle was fought at Cirencester §. Both Cynegils and Cuichelm received baptism from the hands of the bishop Birinus. Cynegils survived his brother seven years, and died in 642.

The throne was next filled by Coinwalch, the son of the last monarch, who had refused to embrace Christianity with his father and uncle. He had formerly married a sister of Penda; but as soon as he obtained the crown, he dismissed her with ignominy, and be-

* Hunt. 181. Malm. 6. Chron. Sax. p. 25. † Hunt. 181.
‡ Bed. ii. 9. Chron. Sax. 27, 28.
§ Chron. Sax. p. 29. Ethelward, 476. Hunt. 181.

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stowed his hand on a more favourite princess. The Mercian, urged by resentment, entered Wessex, defeated Coinwalch, and chased him out of his dominions. He found an asylum in the territory of Anna, the virtuous king of the East-Angles, where he was induced to abjure the deities of paganism. In the third year of his exile, he recovered his throne by the assistance of his nephew Cuthred; and as a testimony of his gratitude, bestowed on his benefactor three thousand hides of land at Aston in Berkshire. His next care was to fulfil the pious bequest of his father, and to erect a church and monastery in the city of Winchester. Its size and magnificence astonished his countrymen *. A. D. 645. A. D. 648.

Coinwalch was eminently successful against the Britons. He defeated them at Bradford, and afterwards at Pen; and made the Parret the western boundary of his kingdom. But he was compelled to bend before the superior power of Wulphere, king of Mercia. If the chance of war threw that prince into the hands of Coinwalch, the reader has seen that he recovered his liberty, defeated the West-Saxons, and transferred the sovereignty of the Isle of Wight, and of part of Hampshire, to his friend Edilwalch, the king of Sussex †. A. D. 652. 658. A. D. 661.

At the death of Coinwalch without children, an alluring prospect was opened to the ambition of the remaining descendants of Cerdic; but the reins of government were instantly seized by his widow Sexburga, a princess whose spirit and abilities were worthy of a crown. By her promptitude and decision she anticipated or suppressed the attempts of her opponents. At the head of her army she overawed the neighbouring princes, who were eager to humble the power of Wessex; and by the lenity of her sway, endeavoured to reconcile her subjects to the novelty of a female reign. Yet a general discontent prevailed; the chieftains conceived it a disgrace to submit to the sceptre of a woman; and she would A. D. 672.

* Bed. iii. 7 Chron. Sax. 31, 32, 33. 39. Malm. f. 6.
† Chron. Sax. 33. 39. Bed. iii. 7; iv. 13. Hunt. 192.

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probably have been driven from the throne, had not her death anticipated the attempt, before the first year of her reign was expired *.

The government of Wessex now assumed the form of an aristocracy. The most powerful thanes associated for their mutual defence; and in the emergencies of foreign war conferred on one of their number the title of
A. D. 674. king †. The first of these was Æscuin, a descendant of Ceolwulf, who fought a bloody but indecisive battle with
A. D. 675. Wulphere, at Bedwin in Wiltshire. He died or was expelled in the following year. Centwin, the brother of Coinwalch, succeeded, and the West-Saxons under his
A. D. 681. conduct drove the Britons to the borders of the ocean. To escape his pursuit, many joined their brethren in Armorica ‡.

Among the numerous princes of the family of Cerdic was Cæadwalla, of the house of Ceawlin. His youth, activity, and courage had distinguished him above his equals: but the qualities which attracted the admiration of the people alarmed the jealousy of Centwin; and Cæadwalla, with a band of faithful adherents, retired from danger into the territory of Sussex. Yet the spirit of the fugitive scorned to solicit assistance from the enemies of his country; and in the extensive forests of Andredswald and Chiltene he maintained his independence §. At the same time Wilfrid, the banished bishop of York, resided in Selsey, which had been given to him by Edilwalch. The similarity of their fortunes formed a bond of amity between the two exiles. Cæadwalla frequently visited the prelate, and received from him seasonable supplies of horses and money. Insensibly

* Chron. Sax. 41. Westminster says she was dethroned (ad ann. 672); but I prefer the testimony of Malmsbury, f. 6.

† This appears the only manner of reconciling the ancient chroniclers with Bede iii. 12.

‡ Chron. Sax. 44. Malm. 6. Hunt. 183. Ethel. 476.

§ De desertis Chiltene et Ondred. Edd. c. xli. The forest of Andredswald has been already mentioned: Chiltene was probably in the eastern part of Hampshire, and in the district of the Meanwari, lately added to Sussex. Remains of the name still exist in Chilton, Chalton, &c.

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the number of his followers increased; adventurers and malcontents crowded to his standard; and he made a sudden and unexpected irruption into the cultivated part of Sussex. Edilwalch, who attempted with a few followers to oppose him, was slain; and the flames of war were spread over the country, when the ealdormen Bercthune and Andhune returned from Kent with the army of Sussex, and drove this band of outlaws to their former asylum in the forest. There Cæadwalla received the welcome intelligence that his persecutor Centwin was dead, and had generously, on his death-bed, named him his successor. He hastened into Wessex: his reputation had already interested the people in his favour his rivals were intimidated by the martial appearance of his followers; and Cæadwalla ascended, without opposition, the throne of Cerdic *. A. D. 685.

The first care of the new king was to remove the disgrace which he had so lately received in Sussex. With a powerful army he entered that devoted country, slew Bercthune in battle, and reduced the natives to their former dependence on the crown of Wessex. Thence he pursued his victorious career into Kent. The inhabitants fled at his approach: and the riches of the open country became the spoil of the invaders †.

The isle of Wight had been formerly subjugated and colonized by a body of Jutes. Wulphere had severed it from Wessex: Cæadwalla resolved to reunite it to his dominions. Though a pagan, he implored, in this difficult enterprise, the assistance of the god of the Christians, and vowed, in the event of victory, to devote one fourth of his conquest to the service of religion. Arvald, who held the island under the crown of Sussex, defended himself with courage; and Cæadwalla received several wounds before he could subdue his antagonist. In his rage he had determined to exterminate the natives, and to supply their place with a colony of Saxons: but he

* Edd. c. xli. Bed. iv. 15. Chron. Sax. 45. Malms. 151.
† Bed. iv. 15. Chron. Sax. p. 46. Hunt. 192.

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yielded to the entreaties and exhortations of Wilfrid; and gave to the bishop, in execution of his vow, three hundred hides of land, the fourth portion of the island. By him the donation was transferred to the clergyman Bernwine, his nephew, who, with the assistance of Hiddela, established the Christian faith among the inhabitants*.

During this invasion two young princes, the brothers of Arvald, had escaped from the island, and sought an asylum among the Jutes of the opposite coast. They were concealed at Stoneham: but the place of their retreat was betrayed to Cædwalla, and an order was despatched for their immediate execution. Cynibert, the abbot of Redbridge, hastened to solicit, and with difficulty obtained, a respite, till he should baptize the unfortunate youths. He hastened to Stoneham, informed them of their approaching end, consoled them with the hope of future happiness, and explained to them the leading doctrines of Christianity. They listened to him with gratitude; the ceremony of baptism was performed; and the two brothers joyfully offered their necks to the sword, "in the certain hope," says Bede, "of exchanging a temporary for an immortal and blissful existence†.

A. D. 687. The next theatre of his vengeance, or his ambition, was the kingdom of Kent. His brother Mollo commanded the West-Saxon army; and the natives, recurring to the policy which they had adopted in the former year, retired at the approach of the invaders. Mollo, whom the absence of an enemy had rendered negligent, incautiously separated from his forces with twelve attendants. He was descried by the peasants, attacked, hunted into a cottage, and burnt to death. Cædwalla hastened to revenge the fate of his brother; and devoted the whole of Kent to the flames and the sword‡.

* Bed. iv. 16. † Bed. ibid. ‡ Chron. Sax. p. 48.

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From his first acquaintance with Wilfrid, the king had imbibed a favourable notion of the Christian worship: when he had mounted the throne, he invited the bishop into Wessex, honoured him as his father and benefactor, and determined to embrace the faith of the gospel. Another prince would have been content to receive baptism from his own prelate or his instructor: Cædwalla resolved to receive it from the hands of the sovereign pontiff. He crossed the sea, visited in his progress the most celebrated churches, testified his piety by costly presents, was honourably entertained by Cunibert, king of the Lombards, and entered Rome in the spring of the year 688. On the vigil of Easter he was baptized by pope Sergius, and changed his name to that of Peter, in honour of the prince of the apostles. But before he laid aside the white robes, the usual distinction of those who had been lately baptized, he was seized with a mortal illness, and died on the twentieth of April, in the thirtieth year of his age. By the command of Sergius he was interred in the church of St. Peter; and an inscription fixed on the tomb preserved the memory, and celebrated the virtues, of the king of the West-Saxons *. A. D. 688.

The successor of Cædwalla was Ina, who derived his descent from the bretwalda Ceawlin. As a warrior Ina was equal, as a legislator he was superior, to the most celebrated of his predecessors. In the fifth year of his reign he assembled the Witena-gemot, and "with the "advice of his father Cenred, of his bishops Hedda and "Erconwald, of all his ealdormen, and wise men, and "clergy," enacted seventy-nine laws, by which he regulated the administration of justice, fixed the legal compensation for crimes, checked the prevalence of hereditary feuds, placed the conquered Britons under the protection

* Chr. Sax. ibid. Bed. v. 7. The concluding lines of his epitaph were these:

Candidus inter oves Christi sociabilis ibit:
Corpore nam tumulum, mente superna tenet.
Commutasse magis sceptrorum insignia credas,
Quem regnum Christi promeruisse vides.—Ibid.

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of the state, and exposed and punished the frauds, which might be committed in the transfer of merchandise, and the cultivation of land *. Essex (by what means is unknown) had already been annexed to his crown †; and Kent was again destined to lament the day in which
A. D. 692. Mollo had perished. At the head of a resistless army Ina demanded the *were* for the death of his cousin; and Withred, king of Kent, to appease the resentment of the invader, paid the full compensation, thirty thousand pounds of silver ‡. The West-Saxon monarch steadily pursued the policy of his fathers in the gradual subjugation of the Britons; added by successive conquests several districts to the western provinces of his kingdom; and expelled, after long struggles, Geraint, the king of Cornwall. His dispute with Ceolred of Mercia, was
A. D. 715. more bloody, and less glorious. The battle was fought at Wodnesbury. Both claimed the victory · but neither dared to renew the engagement §.

If the abilities of Ina had promoted the prosperity of Wessex, the duration of his reign exhausted the patience of the more aspiring among the descendants of Cerdic. He had swayed the sceptre two and-thirty years, when
A. D. 721. the etheling Cenulf ventured to claim the royal authority, and in a short time paid the forfeit of his ambition ‖. The next year his example was followed by another pretender named Eadbyrht; who seized the strong castle of Taunton, which Ina had lately erected in Somersetshire. It was at the moment when an insurrection had drawn the king into Sussex: but his queen Ethelburga assembled an army, took the fortress by storm, and levelled it with the ground. Eadbyrht had the good fortune to escape from his pursuers, and was raised by the

* Leges Sax. p. 14—27.
† Malm. 7. Ina calls the bishop of London, "my bishop." Leg. Sax. p. 14.
‡ Chron. Sax. p. 48. Polychron. p. 243. Malmsbury (7) has too great a sum, 30,000 marks of gold. Florence of Worcester makes it amount to 3700 pounds. Flor. ad ann. 694.
§ Chron. Sax. p. 50, 51. Hunt. 193, 194.
‖ Chron. Sax. p. 52. Flor. Wig. ad ann. 721.

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enemies of Ina to the throne of Sussex. During two years the natives successfully maintained the struggle for their independence, but in the third they were defeated, and the death of Eadbyrht consummated the subjection of their country *. A. D. 725

Ina was the friend and benefactor of the churchmen. All the celebrated monasteries in his kingdom experienced his bounty; and the abbey of Glastonbury was erected by him with a munificence truly royal †. The religious sentiments which he had imbibed in early life, sunk more deeply into his mind as he advanced in years; and their influence was strengthened by the exhortations of his queen, who ardently wished for the retirement of the cloister. With this view, if we may credit the narrative of Malmsbury, she devised and executed a most singular stratagem. The king and queen had given a splendid entertainment to the nobility and clergy of the kingdom. The following morning they left the castle; but after a ride of a few hours, Ina, at the earnest solicitation of Ethelburga, consented to return. He was surprised at the silence and solitude which appeared to reign in the castle. At each step his astonishment increased. The furniture had disappeared: the hall was strewed with fragments and rubbish; and a litter of swine occupied the very bed, in which he had passed the night. His eyes interrogated the queen, who seized the moment to read her husband a lecture on the vanity of human greatness, and the happy serenity of an obscure and religious life ‡. It is not, however, necessary to have recourse to the story. There are other grounds on which the determination of Ina may be explained, without attributing it to so clumsy an artifice. He had now reigned seven-and-thirty years. The peace

* Chron. Sax. p. 52. Hunt. 194.

† Malm. de Ant. Glast. edit. Gale, p. 310. His donations amounted to 2900 pounds of silver, and 350 pounds of gold. Ibid. I should think this money arose from the *were* paid for the death of Mollo: as Ina built the monastery pro anima propinqui sui Mollonis. Gale, 309. Monast. Ang. i. 13.

‡ Malm 7.

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of his old age had been disturbed by rebellion. His body was broken by infirmity, his mind distracted by care. Experience had taught him how difficult it was to hold with a feeble hand the reins of government among a warlike and turbulent nobility. He resolved to descend spontaneously from that situation, which he could no longer retain with dignity; and religion offered
A. D. to his grey hairs a safe and a holy retreat. In the
728. Witena-gemot he resigned the crown, released his subjects from their allegiance, and expressed his wish to spend the remainder of his days in lamenting the errors of his youth. Within a few weeks the royal penitent, accompanied by Ethelburga, quitted Wessex. To watch and pray at the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul, was the first object of their wishes; and after a tedious journey they arrived in Rome, and visited the holy places. It may be, as some writers have asserted, that Ina then built the school of the English in that city *: but this circumstance was unknown to the more ancient historians; and can hardly be reconciled with the humility of the king, whose endeavour it was to elude the notice of the public, and to live confounded with the mass of the common people. On this account he refused to shave his head, or wear the monastic habit; and continued to support himself by the labour of his hands, and to perform his devotions in the garb of a poor and unknown pilgrim. He died before the expiration of the year; and was followed to the grave by Ethelburga, the consort of his greatness, and the faithful companion of his poverty and repentance †.

When Ina resigned the sceptre, he recommended for his successors, Æthelheard, the brother of his queen, and Oswald, who through Ethelbald, Cynebald, and Cuthwin, traced his descent from Ceawlin ‡. The two princes immediately became antagonists: Oswald, though de-

* West. ad ann. 727. He also attributes to Ina the establishment of Peter-pence, which is equally improbable.
† Bed. v. 7. Chron. Sax. p. 52. Malm. 7. Gale, 313.
‡ Bed. v. 7. Chron. Sax. p. 53.

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feated, did not relinquish his pretensions; and till his death in 730, Æthelheard reigned in anxiety and suspense. This domestic quarrel impaired the power, and emboldened the enemies, of Wessex. The British writers claim for their countrymen the glory of three victories, obtained in North-Wales, South-Wales, and Cornwall *. The superiority of the Mercians is better established. Æthelheard was compelled to obey the authority of Ethelbald, king of Mercia: and an unsuccessful attempt A. D. to recover his independence, was chastised by the loss of 733. Somerton, the capital of Somersetshire. After an inglo- A. D. rious reign of thirteen years he left his crown to his bro- 741. ther Cuthred †.

Cuthred first drew his sword to revenge the death of his son, the etheling Cenric, who had been slain in a sedition of the people. The perpetrators of the crime, apprehensive of punishment, took up arms, and placed at their head the ealdorman Edilhun. Their army was A. D. inferior to that of the king: but the bravery of their 750. leader supplied the deficiency of numbers; and the victory was doubtful, till a dangerous wound removed the ealdorman from the field. The conqueror behaved with generosity to his vanquished subjects, and restored Edilhun to his favour. The services of that nobleman in the great victory of Burford have been already mentioned. By his assistance the king defeated the Mercians, and secured the independence of Wessex. An expedition A. D. against the Britons, which added a considerable district 752. to his dominions, closed the career of this warlike monarch, who died in 754 ‡.

Sigebyrcht succeeded to the crown. Before the end of the year, the majority of the thanes rejected his authority, and elected a descendant of Cerdic, by name Cynewulf. Hampshire alone, by the influence of the ealdorman Cumbra, remained faithful to Sigebyrcht: but that nobleman having presumed to remonstrate with

* Caradoc, p. 16. † Chron. Sax. p. 54. Hunt. 196.
‡ Chron. Sax. 56. Hunt. 196. Carad. 116.

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him on his conduct, was put to death by his ungrateful master. The loss of their leader dissolved the connexion between the Hampshire-men and the king: they united with their countrymen in acknowledging the claim of Cynewulf; and Sigebyrcht fled with precipitation to the forest of Andredswald. There he wandered for almost a year; till he was accidentally discovered at Prevet by one of the retainers of Cumbra, who, to revenge the death of his lord, thrust his spear through the body of
A. D. 755. the fugitive prince. He is said to have been buried with royal honours at Winchester *.

Of the long reign of Cynewulf we know little more than that it was signalized by several victories over the Britons, and disgraced by the surrender of Bensington
A. D. 775. to the Mercians. But the history of his death deserves to be preserved, as illustrative of two great features in the Anglo-Saxon character, — devotedness of attachment, and ferocity of revenge. Sigebyrcht had left a brother named Cyneheard, who to escape the jealousy of the new king, abandoned his native country. and consoled the hours of exile with the hope of revenge. Thirty-one years had elapsed from the death of Sigebyrcht, when Cyneheard returned with eighty-four adherents, and
A. D. 785. secreted himself in the woods. It chanced one evening that the king left Winchester with a slender retinue to visit a female at Merton, to whom he was warmly attached. Cyneheard stole silently from his retreat, followed with caution the footsteps of the monarch; and in the dead of the night surrounded the residence of his mistress. Cynewulf was asleep: his attendants were dispersed in the neighbouring houses. At the first alarm he rose, seized his sword, and descended to the door where he descried his enemy, and springing forward aimed a desperate blow at the head of Cyneheard. The wound, which was but slight, was quickly revenged by the weapons of the conspirators. Roused by the noise

* Chron. Sax. 56. Ethelw. 477. Hunt. 196

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of the combatants and the shrieks of the woman, the king's attendants hastened to his assistance; but they found him breathless, and weltering in blood. It was in vain that Cyneheard offered them their lives and possessions. They scorned his proposals: and after a long conflict were all slain, with the exception of a Briton, who, in quality of hostage, had been detained in the court of Cynewulf. Even he was severely wounded.

Early in the morning the news arrived at Winchester. The ealdorman Osric, and Wiverth the thane, immediately mounted their horses, and rode to Merton, followed by their retainers. Cyneheard met them at the gate to justify his conduct, and to solicit their friendship. He pleaded the obligation of revenging the wrongs of his family; asserted his claim to the throne; offered them valuable possessions; and bade them recollect that many of his friends were their kinsmen. "Our kinsmen," they replied, "are not dearer to us than was our lord. "To his murderers we will never submit. If those, "who are related to us, wish to save their lives, they "are at liberty to depart." "The same offer," returned the followers of Cyneheard, "was made to the king's "attendants. They refused it. We will prove to-day "that our generosity is not inferior to theirs." Impatient of delay, Osric forced the barrier: he was opposed with the most desperate intrepidity; and the battle was terminated only by the failure of combatants. Of Cyneheard's eighty-four companions one alone was saved He was found among the slain, covered with wounds but still alive; and owed his preservation to this fortunate circumstance, that he was the godson of Osric. The body of Cynewulf was interred among the ashes of his progenitors at Winchester, that of Cyneheard was conveyed to the church of Exeter *

* Chron. Sax. 57. 63 Hunt. 196, 197. Flor. ad ann. 784. Malm. 7. Ethelw. 477 Westm. ad ann. 786. They all agree in substance, but differ in minor circumstances. I have selected those which appear the most probable.

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The vacant throne was next occupied by Brihtric. The West-Saxon thanes had still retained the ancient privilege of electing their kings. Though they confined their choice to the descendants of Cerdic, they frequently disregarded the order of hereditary succession. This practice was productive of the most serious evils. Every prince of the royal race nourished the hope of ascending the throne; and, as the unsuccessful candidate often appealed to the sword, the strength of the nation was impaired by domestic dissensions; and the reigning king was frequently compelled to divert his attention from the general welfare to his own individual security. The opponent of Brihtric was Egbert, who, unable to withstand the power of his enemy, left the island, and sought employment in the armies of Charlemagne. Of the exploits of the king, during the sixteen years of his reign, historians are silent: the circumstances of his death, on account of its consequences, have arrested their attention. Brihtric had married
A. D. 787. Eadburga, the daughter of Offa, a princess as ambitious and unprincipled as her father By her imperious temper she governed her husband, and, through him, the whole nation. The king had noticed with particular distinction the ealdorman Worr. Jealous of the rising influence of this young nobleman, Eadburga prepared for him a poisonous potion. but unfortunately the king drank of the same cup, and accompanied his favourite
A. D. 789. to the grave. The West-Saxons vented their imprecations against the murderess, who escaped with her treasures to France; and the Witena-gemot enacted a law, by which the consorts of the future kings were deprived of the style and privileges of royalty. Eadburga was presented to Charlemagne, and when the jeering monarch asked her, whom she would have, him or his son, "Your son," she replied, "for he is the younger." The emperor was, or affected to be, displeased; but made her a present of an opulent monastery, in which she resided with the title of abbess. Soon, however, her

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dissolute conduct scandalized the sisterhood, and the public. She was expelled with ignominy, and after many adventures, terminated her miserable existence at Pavia in Italy, where the daughter of the king of Mercia, and widow of the king of Wessex, was often seen soliciting in rags the charity of passengers. Brihtric died in the year 800*.

EGBERT.

The expulsion of Egbert, and his reception at the court of Charlemagne, have been already mentioned. Three years he served in the armies of that emperor, and improved the period of his exile in acquiring a proficiency in the arts of war and government. The death of Brihtric recalled him to his native country. He was the only remaining prince of the house of Cerdic, deriving his descent from that conqueror, through Inigils, the brother of Ina. By the West-Saxon thanes his claim was unanimously acknowledged; and the day of his coronation was ennobled by a victory, the omen of subsequent conquests. Desirous perhaps to disturb the joy of the ceremony, Ethelmund, the Mercian ealdorman of Gloucestershire, attempted with a body of horsemen to cross the Isis at Kempsford, and was opposed by Wulstan, the West-Saxon ealdorman of Wiltshire. Both the commanders fell in the engagement: but the Mercians were routed, and pursued with considerable loss into their own territory†. A. D. 800.

Egbert devoted the commencement of his reign to the cultivation of peace, and the improvement of his people. It was not till 809 that he unsheathed the sword: but from that period each succeeding year was marked by new victories and conquests. He repeatedly invaded and appropriated to himself a portion of the territory of the ancient Britons: the havoc of war and the flames of destruction were carried to the western

* Chron. Sax. 63. 68. Asser. p. 10. 12. † Chron. Sax. 68.

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extremity of the island; and the natives of Cornwall, exhausted by numerous defeats, reluctantly submitted to the conqueror *. The East-Angles, who still remembered the treachery of Offa, by entreaties and presents
A. D. induced him to make war upon the Mercians. The two
823. armies met at Ellendune on the banks of the Willy; and Beornwulf, after an obstinate resistance, yielded the palm of victory to his adversary, who, seizing the favourable moment, overran the feeble kingdoms of Kent and Essex, and united them to his own dominions. Beornwulf, and after him his successor Ludecan, sought to wreak their vengeance on the East-Angles †. Both lost their lives in the fruitless attempt; and Wiglaf, who next ascended the throne, had scarcely grasped the sceptre, when he was compelled to drop it at the ap-
A. D. proach of the West-Saxons. Unable to collect an army,
827. he endeavoured to elude the pursuit of the invaders; wandered for three years in the forests and marshes; and during four months obtained a secure retreat in the cell of Ethelburga, the daughter of Offa, who lived a recluse in the church of Croyland. Time, and the entreaties of the abbot Siward, mitigated the resentment of Egbert: who at last permitted Wiglaf to retain the sceptre, on condition that he should pay an annual tribute, and swear fealty to the king of Wessex ‡. By the submission of the Mercians and of the East-Angles,
A. D. Egbert found himself on the frontiers of Northumbria,
828. which was already subdued by the terror of his name. The chieftains, with Eanfrid at their head, met him at Dore, acknowledged him for their lord, and gave hostages for their obedience. Thence he directed his arms against the Britons, penetrated through the heart of North Wales, and planted his victorious standard in the isle of Anglesey. Thus in the space of nineteen years did Egbert, by his policy and victories, extend the authority of Wessex over the greater part of the island, and

* Chron. Sax. p. 69, 70. Ethelweard, 478.
† Prece oretionue Ingul. 7. Chron. Sax. p. 70. ‡ Ingul. 7 a

obtain for himself the honourable title of "the eighth "Bretwalda*."

Scarcely, however, had the king attained this superiority over the native princes, when he saw himself assailed by a foreign and most dangerous enemy. At this period the peninsula of Jutland, the islands of the Baltic, and the shores of the Scandinavian continent, were the birth-place of a race of men, who, like the Saxons of old, spent the best portion of their lives on the waves, despised the tranquil enjoyments of peace, and preferred the acquisitions of rapine to the laborious profits of industry. Their maritime situation familiarized them with the dangers of the ocean; and an absurd law of succession, which universally prevailed among a multitude of chieftains, consigned the majority of their children to the profession of piracy. The eldest son obtained the whole patrimony of his family: the rest of the brothers received no other inheritance than their swords and ships, with which they were expected to acquire reputation and riches†. Till the eighth century the sea-kings (so the principal of these adventurers were called), confined their depredations to the northern seas: but they had heard of the wealthy provinces in the south; and the success of their attempts incited them to engage in more distant and important expeditions. Several chieftains associated under the banner of a renowned and experienced leader. In spring the pirates sailed to a distant province, landed, ravaged the country, collected the spoil, steered to another coast, repeated their depredations, and in autumn returned laden with plunder to their own country. Their first attempts were directed against the British isles: next

* Chron. Sax. 71, 72. Ethelw. 478. The opinion that he gave himself the title of the first king of England, rests on no sufficient authority. Several of his predecessors had as good a right to it as himself: and his immediate successors contented themselves with the usual style of kings of the West-Saxons. By Monarcha Britannia, Huntingdon (196) probably means no more than Bretwalda.

† Gale, 533. Snorre, Havniæ, 1777. p. 43. Messen. Stockholmæ, 1706. p. 4.

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they desolated the coasts of France and Spain; at last they sailed through the straits which divide Europe from Africa, and taught the shores of the Mediterranean to tremble at the names of the Danes and Northmen. The establishment of a Danish dynasty in England, of the duchy of Normandy in France, and afterwards of a powerful kingdom in Italy, bears sufficient testimony to their courage, their activity, and their perseverance.

Of their descents in England during the eighth century three only are recorded, one on the isle of Thanet, and two on the coast of Northumbria. If these attempts produced a temporary alarm, they furnished no cause of permanent uneasiness. But towards the close of the reign of Egbert the numbers of the pirates perpetually increased, and their visits were annually renewed. In 832 they landed in the isle of Sheppy, conveyed away the plunder, and returned home without molestation. The next year a fleet of five-and-thirty sail entered the mouth of the Dart: and Egbert had the mortification to see his West-Saxons turn their backs to the invaders. Convinced of the necessity of preparation, he summoned all his vassals to meet him in London, explained to them the measures which he had resolved to adopt, and waited in anxious suspense for the next descent of the enemy. Nor were they inferior in policy to the king. A.D. 835. They landed on the coast of Cornwall; where, by the offers of friendship, they seduced the Britons from their allegiance; and at Hengstone hill encountered with united forces the men of Wessex. The king commanded in person; and a bloody but decisive victory restored the glory of his arms, crushed the rebellion of the Britons, and compelled the invaders to seek refuge in their ships. This was the last exploit of Egbert, who died in the following year, after a long, a glorious, and a fortunate reign *.

* Ethelw. 478. Hunt. 198. Ing. 10. Chron. Sax. ann. 836. But Egbert died in 838 or 839, according to a charter of Ethelwulf, dated anno ab incarnatione Christi DCCCXXXVIII. indictione ii. primo videlicet anno regni Ethelwulfi regis post obitum patris sui. Cod. Dipl. i. 321.

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ETHELWULF.

Egbert, about the middle of his reign, had moulded the petty kingdoms of Kent, Essex and Sussex, into one government, which he gave to his elder son Ethelwulf, with the title of king.* Ethelwulf, on the death of his father, succeeded to the higher throne of Wessex, and transferred this, a subordinate kingdom, to his son Athelstan.† A. D. 836.

Of this monarch it has frequently been observed, that he was fitter to wear the cowl than to wield the sceptre. For so unfavourable a character he is principally indebted to the pen of Malmsbury, who describes him as a prince of inferior abilities, and assigns the merit of his government to the wisdom of his ministers Alstan, bishop of Sherborne, and Swithin, bishop of Winchester. But the accuracy of this statement may be questioned. In the pages of the more ancient annalists Ethelwulf appears with greater dignity; and if we may estimate his character by his conduct, we cannot refuse him the praise of activity and courage.

The education of his more early years had been confided to Swithin, provost of Winchester; and the care of the tutor was repaid by Egbert with the office of royal chaplain. From the lessons of his preceptor the young prince was removed to study the military art under the auspices of his father; and after the victory of Ellendune, he commanded the army which expelled Baldred, king of Kent, from his dominions, and annexed that province, with Surrey and Essex, to the ancient patrimony of the house of Cerdic†. As soon as he had

*The chronicles assign the conquest of Kent to the year 823 or 824. In 827 we first meet with Ethelwulf Rex, and in 828 Egbert says of him, quem regem constituimus in Canita. Cod. Dipl. i. 287. Athelstan was the son of Ethelwulf. Ethelward, i. c. 2. †Malmsbury (De Pont. l. ii. f. 137) tells us that Ethelwulf, at the death of his father, was a sub-deacon; but that a dispensation for him to ascend the throne was obtained from Leo III., because he was the only surviving descendant of Cerdic. But Leo had then been dead more than twenty years; Athelstan, the brother or son of Ethelwulf, was living, and might have governed Wessex as well as Kent; and the story itself appears to have been unknown to all preceding writers, and even to Malmsbury

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mounted the throne he bestowed upon his former tutor the vacant bishopric of Winchester; but retained at the head of the council the experienced bishop of Sherborne. The incessant and desultory invasions of the Northmen suggested the propriety of appointing officers in the maritime districts, who, on the first alarm, might collect the inhabitants, and oppose the landing or progress of the enemy: and this arrangement, though, by dividing the force of the country, it lessened the chance of victory, generally succeeded in confining the depredations of the invaders to the vicinity of the coast. The whole island
A. D. was now surrounded by their squadrons. While one
837. occupied the attention of Ethelwulf, a second of thirty-three sail entered the port of Southampton, and soon afterwards a third effected a landing on the isle of Portland. Of the king's success we are not informed. Wulfere defeated the invaders at Southampton; but Ethelhelm was slain at Portland with many of the men of Dorset. The next spring a powerful army landed in Lincolnshire. The ealdorman Herebryht, with his followers, perished in the marshes; and the barbarians pushed their victorious career through East-Anglia to the Thames. The following year three bloody battles were fought at Rochester, Canterbury, and London: and Ethelwulf himself was defeated in an action at Charmouth with thirty-five sail of the enemy *.

Whether it was that the pirates were discouraged by the obstinate resistance which they experienced, or that France, now become the theatre of intestine feuds and fraternal ambition, offered a more inviting prospect, they appear to have abandoned Britain for the next ten years,

when he wrote his history of the kings (De Reg. 20). The tale of Ethelwulf having been bishop of Winchester is still less entitled to credit. Both reports probably arose from confounding together different persons with the same or similar names. Thus in the ancient life of St. Neot (Act. S.S. Bened. Sæc. iv. tom. ii. p. 325), the bishop of Winchester his contemporary, and Ethelwold who was bishop a century afterwards, are both described as the same person.

* Chron. Sax. 73, 74. Asser. annal. 155. About this time occurred the wars between the Scots and Picts, which ended in the subjugation of the latter by Kenneth, king of Scots, in 843. Fordun, iv. 6. 8.

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while they visited and revisited with impunity the different provinces on the coast of Gaul. But in 851 several squadrons, as if by common consent, returned to the island. One army had landed the preceding autumn in the isle of Thanet, and had passed the winter on shore, a circumstance which filled the Saxons with consternation, as it seemed to denote a design of permanent conquest. In the spring a fleet of three hundred and fifty sail ascended the Thames: Canterbury and London were sacked, and Bertulf, the tributary king of Mercia, to whom the defence of the district had been assigned, was defeated *. The barbarians turned to the left, and entered Surrey, where Ethelwulf with his West-Saxons waited to receive them at Okeley. The battle that ensued was the subject of a poem, fragments of which have been preserved by the ancient chroniclers. It was most obstinate and sanguinary. The victory remained to Ethelwulf; and the loss of the Danes is said to have been greater than they had ever sustained in any age or country. The other divisions of the Saxon forces were equally successful. Ceorl with the men of Devon defeated the barbarians at Wenbury; and Athelstan, king of Kent, captured nine of their ships in an engagement near Sandwich. So many victories gave to this the name of the prosperous year: and the Northmen, disheartened by their losses, respected during the remainder of Ethelwulf's reign the shores of Britain †.

Burhred, king of Mercia, the successor of Bertulf, had determined to chastise the insolence of the Welsh, who made frequent incursions into his territories. Merfyn Frych, their sovereign, fell in the battle: but Roderic Mawr succeeded to the throne, and defied all the power of the Mercian. Burhred had recourse to his superior lord, the king of Wessex; and Ethelwulf, A. D. 853.

* Chron. Sax. 74. Asser, 5, 6. Ing. 11.
† Chron. Sax. 74, 75. Asser. 5, 6. The Danes made one or two descents afterwards, but of little importance.

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uniting his forces with those of his vassal, penetrated through Wales as far as the isle of Anglesey, and compelled the natives to acknowledge the ancient superiority of the king of Mercia. At his return he gave his daughter Ethelswitha in marriage to Burhred; and the nuptials were celebrated with royal magnificence at Chippenham *.

The repeated invasions of the barbarians induced Ethelwulf frequently to consult the assembly of his
A. D. 854. thanes. On one of these occasions, by their advice, and with their consent, he published a charter, of which the copies are so different, and the language is so obscure, that it is difficult to ascertain its real object: whether it were to exempt from all secular services the tenth part of each manor, whoever might be the possessor, or to annex that portion of land to the possessions which had already been settled on the church. That the grant, however, was highly advantageous to the clergy, is evident from the engagement of the bishops of Sherborne and Winchester, who appointed the Wednesday of each week as a day of public supplication, to implore the divine assistance against the Danes. This charter was at first confined to the kingdom of Wessex: but in a council of the tributary states, held at Winchester in 855, it was extended to all the nations of the Saxons †.

The pious curiosity which had induced so many of the Saxon princes and prelates to visit the city of Rome, was not yet extinguished in the breasts of their posterity. The bishop of Winchester had lately performed the journey, and had been accompanied by Alfred, the youngest and best-beloved of the sons of Ethelwulf, a boy in the fifth year of his age. The prince was honorably received by the pontiff Leo IV., who, at the request

* Chron. Sax. 75. Asser, 6, 7. Carradoc, 27.

† See the charters in Wilk. p. 183. Spelm. p. 348. Ing. 17. Gale, 359. Westm. 158. Also Chron. Sax. 76. Ailred, 351. Asser, 8. Ethelw. 478. Dugdale, mon. 1. 32. 100. Hunt. 200. Malm. de Pont. 360.

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of his father, conferred on him the regal unction, and the sacrament of confirmation *. In 855, the tranquillity which England enjoyed, encouraged Ethelwulf to undertake the same journey. Attended by a splendid retinue, the royal pilgrim, with his son Alfred, crossed the channel, visited the most celebrated churches of Gaul, and was sumptuously entertained at the court of Charles the Bald, king of France. At Rome he spent several months in viewing the remains of ancient magnificence, and indulging his devotion at the shrines of the apostles. He rebuilt the school or hospital of the Saxons which had lately been burnt, made numerous presents to the pope, the nobles, the clergy, and the people of Rome, and solicited an ordinance that no Englishman should be condemned to do penance in irons out of his own country †. In his return he again visited the French monarch, and after a courtship of three months was married to his daughter Judith, who probably had not yet reached her twelfth year. The ceremony was performed by Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims At the conclusion the princess was crowned, and seated on a throne by the side of her husband; a distinction which she afterwards claimed, to the great displeasure of the West-Saxons.

* Asser, 7. Chron. Sax. 77. Why did the king request the pope to crown Alfred at so early an age? Different reasons have been suggested by ancient and modern writers. Perhaps it was to secure his succession to the crown after his brothers to the exclusion of their children. Such at least was Ethelwulf's determination in his will.

† Asser, 8, 9. Chron. Sax. 76. Anastas. Biblioth. ii. 206, 207. Par. 1649. Annal. Bertin. apud Bouquet, viii. 72. 208. 620. For parricide and other enormous crimes, the bishops were accustomed to condemn penitents to wear irons for a certain number of years, and on some occasions sent them to Rome to be absolved by the pope. One of these criminals is thus described by Wulstan of Winchester, an eye-witness:—

Occidit proprium crudeli morte parentem,
Unde reo statim præcepit episcopus urbis,
Ferreus ut ventrem constringeret acriter omnem
Circulus, et similem paterentur brachia pœnam,
Continuosque novem semet cruciando per annos,
Atria sacrorum lustraret sæpe locorum,
Viseret et sacri pulcherrima limina Petri,
Quo veniam tantæ mereretur sumere culpæ.

Act. Bened. sæc. iv. tom. ii. p. 72.

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Ancient writers have not mentioned to whom Ethelwulf had intrusted the reins of government during his absence. But Ethelbald, his eldest son, a prince of impetuous passions and insatiable ambition, conceived the design of seizing the throne for himself, and of holding it in defiance of his father. His advisers and accomplices were Alstan, the celebrated bishop of Sherborne, and Eanwulf, the ealdorman of Somerset. In the forest of Selwood the project was disclosed to some of the more powerful thanes, whose approbation appeared to ensure its success. But at the return of Ethelwulf the tide of popularity flowed in his favour: the majority of the nation condemned the treason of an unnatural son; and a civil war would have been the consequence, had not the moderation of the king consented to a partition of his dominions. He resigned to Ethelbald the kingdom of Wessex, and contented himself with the provinces which Athelstan, who died in 853, had governed with the title of king. He survived this compromise but two years, which he spent in acts of charity and exercises of devotion. By his will, which was confirmed in a general assembly of the thanes, he left that share of the kingdom still in his possession to his second son, Ethelbert; and, dividing his landed property into two portions, bequeathed the larger to his other sons, Ethelbald, Ethelred, and Alfred, and the smaller to his daughter and more distant relatives; but with this difference, that the former was to be held jointly by the three brothers, and to become ultimately the property of the survivor. Both portions he charged with the obligation of maintaining one poor person on every ten hides of land, and of paying a yearly rent of three hundred mancuses to the pope for the use of that prelate, and the service of the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul. He died in 857, and was buried at Winchester.*

A. D. 856.

ETHELBALD.

After the death of Ethelwulf, Ethelbald continued to

* Asser, 9, 12, 13. Testament. Alfred. Ibid. 79; which, however, should be corrected by the copy of the Anglo-Saxon original, published by Manning, and afterwards by Cardale, and in the Cod. Dipl. 11, 112.

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sit on the throne of Wessex: Ethelbert, in pursuance of his father's will, assumed the government of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Surrey. The new king had been the foremost to condemn the marriage of Ethelwulf with the daughter of the French monarch: he now forgot his former enmity to the princess, and took the young widow to his own bed. This incestuous connexion scandalized the people of Wessex: their disapprobation was publicly and loudly expressed; and the king, overawed by the remonstrances of the bishop of Winchester, consented to a separation *. Judith (I may here be allowed to pursue her history), unwilling to remain in a country which had witnessed her disgrace, sold her lands, the dower she had received from Ethelwulf, and returned to the court of her father. Charles, who dared not trust the discretion of his daughter, ordered her to be confined within the walls of Senlis, but to be treated at the same time with the respect due to a queen. The cunning of Judith was, however, more than a match for the vigilance of her guards. By the connivance of her brother she eloped in disguise with Baldwin, great forester of France; and the fugitives were soon beyond the reach of royal resentment. The king prevailed on his bishops to excommunicate Baldwin, for having forcibly carried off a widow; but the pope disapproved of the sentence; and at his entreaty Charles gave a reluctant consent to their marriage, though neither he nor archbishop Hincmar could be induced to assist at the ceremony. They lived in great magnificence in Flanders, the earldom of which was bestowed on them by the king, and from their union descended Matilda, the wife of William the Conqueror, who gave to England a long race of sovereigns †.

A. D. 859.

In the battles which were fought during the life of Ethelwulf, Ethelbald had acquired peculiar distinction.

* Asser, 13.

† Apud Bouquet, viii. Anna.. Bertin. 77, 78. 83. Ep. Hinc. ad Nic. pap. 214. Chron. Sith. 268. Capitul. Car. Cal. 650.

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During his own reign, either he possessed no opportunity of displaying his courage, or the memory of his exploits has been obliterated. Yet his martial character so endeared him to the youth of Wessex, that they lamented his death as a national calamity, and foretold that England would soon feel how severe a loss she had sustained. He died in 860.

ETHELBERT.

According to some writers, the crown of Wessex, agreeably to the provisions contained in the testament of Ethelwulf, ought, on the demise of the last king, to have descended to Ethelred, the third of the brothers. But Ethelbert, who had hitherto possessed the kingdom of Kent, advanced the claim of seniority, and his pretensions were admitted by the great council of Wessex. His martial virtues are said to have been equal to those of his late brother: and the title of "invincible conqueror" was accorded to him by the admiration or flattery of his contemporaries. Yet the meagre chronicles of the times contain no record of his victories; and we are only told that his reign was short, and that he died in 865.

A. D. 864. Under this prince the city of Winchester was sacked by the Northmen, who, as they conveyed the plunder to Southampton, were defeated with great slaughter by the ealdormen of Hampshire and Berkshire. Another army landed in the isle of Thanet, and sold to the men of Kent their forbearance for a considerable sum of money. But they laughed at the credulity of the purchasers; and the eastern moiety of the province was pillaged and depopulated by the faithless barbarians *.

It was also during his reign that an event occurred in the north, which endangered by its consequences the very existence of the Saxons as a nation. Among the

* Asser, 14, 15. Chron. Sax. 78. Rudborn (Ang. Sac. i. 206) postpones the capture of Winchester to the first year of Ethelred; and adds, that every monk belonging to the cathedral was slain by the infidels. The Annales Wintonienses place this event in 873.—Ibid., note.

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sea-kings, one of the most adventurous and successful was Ragnar Lodbrog. On the shores of the Baltic, in the Orkneys and the Hebrides, in Ireland, Scotland, and Northumbria, he had diffused the terror of his name. In France the intrepid pirate had conducted his fleet up the Seine, spread the flames of devastation on each side of its banks, and taken possession of the city of Paris, which was redeemed from destruction by the payment of seven thousand pounds of silver. By his orders ships of a larger size than had hitherto been navigated by his countrymen, were constructed for an invasion of England: but, whether it was owing to the violence of the weather, or the unskilfulness of the mariners, they were wrecked on the coast of Northumbria. Ragnar with several of his followers reached the shore, and heedless of the consequences, commenced the usual career of depredation. Though the Northumbrians had cast off the yoke imposed on them by Egbert, their country was torn by civil dissensions; and at this very moment, their chieftains were divided by the opposite pretensions of two competitors, Osbert and Ælla. At A. D. the first news of the descent of the Northmen, the latter 865. flew to the coast, fought with the plunderers, made Ragnar prisoner, and immediately put him to death. He is said to have been devoured by snakes, and to have consoled his last moments with the hope, that "the cubs "of the boar" would avenge his fate*. Nor was he disappointed. His sons, who were in Denmark, swore to punish the murderer; the relations, the friends, and the admirers of the deceased chieftain crowded to their standard; and eight sea-kings, with twenty jarls, combined their forces in the pursuit of revenge and plunder†

* Saxo Gram. p. 176. Soræ, 1654. Pet. Olaus, apud Langbeck, p. 111. Hafniæ, 1772.

† Ragnar's death was known to the English chroniclers: but they were ignorant of the reason which induced his sons to attempt the conquest of the island. The industry of Mr. Turner has discovered the real cause in the northern historians.—Turner, ii. 107. 118.

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ETHELRED.

By the death of Ethelbert, the crown of Wessex had devolved on Ethelred, the third of the sons of Ethelwulf. About the same time the northern armament, conveying several thousand warriors, under the command of Inguar and Ubbo*, two of the sons of Ragnar, reached the
A. D. coast of East-Anglia. They landed without opposition:
866. but finding their number unequal to the enterprise which they had undertaken, they fortified their camp, and patiently waited the arrival of reinforcements from the Baltic. The depth of winter was spent in procuring horses for the army, and in debauching the fidelity of some among the Northumbrian chieftains. In February they abandoned East-Anglia, and by the first of March were in possession of York. Alarmed for their country, Osbert and Ælla postponed the decision of their private quarrel, and united their forces against the common enemy. On the twenty-first of March they surprised the Danes in the neighbourhood of York, drove them into the city, and made a breach in the walls. They had penetrated into the streets, when despair redoubled the efforts of the Northmen; and the assailants were in their turn compelled to retire. Osbert,
A. D. with the bravest of the Northumbrians, was slain: Ælla
867. had the misfortune to fall alive into the hands of his enemies; and Inguar and Ubbo enjoyed the exquisite delight of torturing the man who had slain their father. His ribs were divided from the spine: his lungs were drawn through the opening; and salt was thrown into the wounds. This victory gave the Danes undisputed possession of the country south of the Tyne: the natives on the north of that river solicited the friendship of the invaders, and, with their consent, conferred the sovereign power on a chieftain called Egbert †.

* Lell. Coll. i. 220.
† Asser. 17. 18. Chron. Sax. 79. Saxo Gram. 177. Pet. Olaus. 111

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The army of the barbarians now divided itself into two bodies. The smaller remained at York to cultivate the country: the more numerous marched to the south, and took possession of Nottingham. Burhred, king of Mercia, immediately solicited the assistance of Ethelred, who, with his brother Alfred and the forces of Wessex, joined th Mercian army. The enemy prudently confined themselves within the walls of the town; and the besiegers were unable to force them to a battle. At length Nottingham was surrendered by capitulation, and the Danes retired without molestation to their countrymen at York *. A. D. 868.

The next expedition of the Northmen led them across the Humber into Lincolnshire. They landed at Lindesey, burnt the rich monastery of Bardeney, and put its inhabitants to the sword. The summer months were devoted to the pursuit of plunder; in September they passed the Witham, and entered the district of Kesteven. To oppose their progress the ealdorman Algar had collected the youth of the neighbourhood. In the first attempt he repulsed their advanced guard, and killed three of their kings. On the following morning his little army was surrounded by all the forces of the invaders. The advantage of the ground enabled the Saxons to protract the contest till the evening: at last they were broken by an artifice of the enemy, and slaughtered without mercy. The victors continued their march during the silence of the night; but their route was illumined by repeated conflagrations. As the flames approached the monastery of Croyland, the younger monks escaped in their boats across the lake · A. D. 870.

Sim. Dun. 14. The punishment inflicted on Ælla was usual among the Northmen, and was called "at rista örn," from the supposed resemblance of the victim to the figure of an eagle. The operation was generally performed by the chief himself. It is thus described by Snorre:—Ad speciem aquilæ dorsum ita ei laniabat, ut adacto ad spinam gladio, costisque omnibus ad lumbos usque a tergo divisis, pulmones extraheret.—Snorre, p. 103.

* Asser. 19, 20. Chron. Sax. 79. Ingul. 18.

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the more aged, with the boys, retired to the church. Oskytul, a Danish chieftain, soon forced the gates: the abbot was beheaded on the steps of the altar; and his companions, with the exception of one boy, were massacred in different apartments of the abbey. Having pillaged and burnt the monastery, they directed their march to Medeshamstede. An attempt was made by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood to defend the walls; and in the first assault one of the sons of Ragnar received a severe wound. But in the second the fury of the Danes burst open the gates: the women and children, who had sought refuge within the abbey, were massacred: and Ubbo avenged the wound of his brother by slaughtering, with his own hand, the abbot and eighty-four monks. From the ashes of Medeshamstede they proceeded to Huntingdon, and from the destruction of that place to the isle of Ely. The nuns of this monastery, who were descended from the noblest of the Saxon families, were sacrificed to their lust and cruelty: the treasures of the country, which had been deposited in the island, were divided among the barbarians; and the edifice, with every other building within the range of their devastation, was devoured by the flames *.

It will excite surprise that the Saxon princes should remain idle spectators of the progress of the Danes, instead of uniting their forces for the defence of their common country. They appear to have conceived that the fury of the torrent would, as it rolled on, gradually subside. The king of Mercia had seen one of his most opulent provinces for six months in their possession, and yet, under the pretence of opposing the Britons in the west, had not made a single effort for its deliverance. From Mercia the invaders entered the country of the East-Angles. They had already burnt Thetford, when Ulfketul, the ealdorman, retarded their advance for a

* Asser, 20. Ingul. 19. 24.

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few days. But Edmund, the king, conscious of his inability to contend against superior numbers, and afraid of inflaming their resentment by a fruitless resistance, disbanded his forces, and retired towards his castle of Framlingham *. He was intercepted at Hoxon on the Waveney, and conducted in chains to the quarters of Inguar. The proposals of the sea-king were rejected by the captive as repugnant to his honour and religion. To extort his compliance, he was bound naked to a tree, and lacerated with whips: some of the spectators, with cruel dexterity, shot their arrows into his arms and legs: and the Dane, wearied out by his constancy, ordered his head to be struck off. Edmund was revered as a martyr by his subjects and their posterity †.

The winter was spent by the Northmen in regulating the fate of the East-Angles, and in arranging plans of future conquest. From Thetford, the general rendezvous, Inguar returned to his former associates in Northumbria ‡; Gothrun assumed the sceptre of East- A. D.
Anglia, which, from that period, became a Danish king- 871.
dom; and Halfdene and Bacseg, leading the more adventurous of the invaders into Wessex, surprised the town of Reading. They fortified the place, and, to strengthen their position, began on the third day to open a trench from the Thames to the Kennet: but the ealdorman Ethelwulf attacked them at Englefield, killed one of their commanders, and drove the workmen into the camp. Four days later Ethelred and his brother Alfred arrived with the army of Wessex. The parties, which the pursuit of plunder had led to a distance, were easily put to flight: but in an attempt to storm the Danish intrenchments the Saxons experienced a loss, which taught them to respect the skill as well as the valour of the invaders. Ethelred, however, sensible

* In Leland's Collectanea (i. 222), we are told that Edmund fought a great battle with the Danes, in which he lost most of his men.
† Asser, 20. Ing. 24. Abbo Floriac. in Act. Sanct. West. ad ann. 870.
‡ He afterwards invaded Ireland, and died there. Annal. Ulton. 65.

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that his crown was at stake, reinforced his army, and, before the end of the week, met the enemy at Escesdune *. The night was spent on each side in preparation for the combat: the morning discovered the Danes assembled in two divisions on different parts of an eminence. Ethelred ordered the Saxons to adopt a similar arrangement, and retired to his tent to assist at mass †. The impatience of Alfred condemned the piety of his brother; and ordering his men to cover their heads with their shields, he boldly led them up the declivity,
A. D. and attacked one of the hostile divisions. Ethelred
871. followed quickly with the remainder of the army; and the Northmen, after a most obstinate resistance, were routed, and pursued in confusion as far as Reading. Among the slain were Bacseg, one of their kings, and the jarls Osbern, Frean, Harold, and the two Sidrocs. A solitary thorn tree pointed out to posterity the spot on which the Danes were defeated ‡.

Within a fortnight after the last sanguinary conflict, another was fought at Basing, in which the invaders took an ample revenge. Their numbers were soon after increased by the arrival of another armament from the Baltic, and a most obstinate battle ensued at Morton in Berkshire. The Saxon chroniclers give the advantage to their countrymen, but acknowledge that the Danes remained in possession of the field. Ethelred, who had been wounded, survived only a few days. He died on the 23d of March, and was buried at Winborne, where his memory was afterwards honoured as that of a martyr. §

* Escesaune has been sought in different places by different writers. As the Saxon Chronicle (p. 135) says, that it lay in the road from Wallingford to Cuckhamsley hill, Gibson was probably right when he fixed it at Aston.

† It has been said that Ethelred was "impressed with a dispiriting "belief that he should not survive the battle" (Turner, vol. ii. p. 154): but the words of Asser have a very different meaning. Affirmans se inde (e tentorio) vivum non discessurum, antequam sacerdos missam finiret, e divinum pro humano nolle deserere servitium. Asser, 22.

‡ Asser, 24. Chron. Sax. 81. § Asser, 21—24.

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CHAPTER IV.

ANGLO SAXONS.

Birth, education and accession of Alfred—Successes of the Danes—Alfred opposes them by sea.—His victories, laws, and improvements—Reigns of Edward—Athelstan—Edmund—and Edred.

ALFRED THE GREAT.

WITH the name of Alfred, posterity has associated the epithet of "the great." The kings, his predecessors, are chiefly known to us by their actions in the field of battle: it is the praise of Alfred that he was not only a warrior, but also the patron of the arts, and the legislator of his people. *Their* history has been compressed into a few pages: but *his* merit will deserve a more full and detailed narration. A D. 871.

Alfred was born at Wantage in 849, the youngest of the four sons, whom Osburga, the daughter of Oslac, bore to Ethelwulf. The beauty, vivacity, and playfulness of the boy endeared him to his parents, who affected to foresee that he would one day prove the chief ornament of the race of Cerdic. It was this partiality which induced the king to send him, when only in his fifth year, with a numerous retinue to Rome, to be crowned by the pontiff; and afterwards, when the royal pilgrim himself visited the apostolic city, Alfred was selected to accompany his father.

The Anglo-Saxons of this period had degenerated from the literary reputation of their ancestors. The thanes, dividing their time between the occupations of war and the pleasures of the chase, despised the tranquil pursuits of knowledge, and directed the attention of

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their children to those exercises which impart habits of strength, agility, and courage. Osburga, however, had the merit of awakening in the mind of Alfred that passion for learning, by which he was so honourably distinguished from his contemporaries. Holding in her hand a Saxon poem elegantly written, and beautifully illuminated, she offered it as a reward to the first of her children, whose proficiency should enable him to read it. The emulation of Alfred was excited: he ran to his master, applied to the task with diligence, performed it to the satisfaction of the queen, and received the prize of his industry.*

But soon, by the death of both parents, the education of the young prince devolved on his elder brothers, to whom the pursuits of literature were probably objects of contempt. His proficiency under their care was limited to the art of reading: from which he could derive no other immediate advantage than the perusal of a few Saxon poems, and books of devotion, written in the vernacular idiom. It proved, however, to him an acquisition of considerable importance; for it laid the foundation of his subsequent improvement: it urged his curiosity to explore those treasures of history and science, which were locked up in the obscurity of a learned language; and it enabled him at a later period to apply with success to the study of the Latin tongue. But his health was then impaired by disease, his mind occupied with the cares of government: and in the company of his friends he often lamented that indulgence, which had permitted him to throw away the years of his youth in pursuits and diversions, from which he had reaped nothing but ignorance and regret†.

But if the mind of Alfred had not received the polish of classical literature, it had been deeply impressed with religious sentiments, which influenced his conduct

* Asser, 16. The same writer carefully distinguishes the liberales artes from the venatoria et cæteris artibus, *quæ nobilibus conveniunt*, p. 43. [But this present must be ascribed to Judith, Alfred's step-mother. Ass. Ib. & Turner. — Amer. Edit.]

† Asser, 17.

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through life. At the age of twenty he determined from motives of virtue to marry. The lady, whom he honoured with his choice, was Alswitha, the daughter of Ethelred, a Mercian ealdorman, and of Eadburga, a princess of the race of Penda. But the joy of the nuptial ceremony was clouded by an unexpected calamity. In the midst of the festivity, while Alfred was entertaining the thanes of both kingdoms, he was suddenly seized with a most painful disorder. Its seat was internal: its origin and nature baffled all the science and skill of the Saxon physicians. By the ignorance of the people it was attributed to magic, or to the malice of the devil, or to a new and unknown species of fever. From that moment to the day in which Asser wrote his history, during the long lapse of five-and-twenty years, the king was afflicted with this mysterious disease: its attacks were almost incessant; and each short interval of ease was embittered by the prospect of a speedy return of pain. It continued to harass him till his death*.

During the reigns of his brothers, he possessed the government of a petty district, with the title of king. At the death of Ethelred he was called to the throne by the unanimous voice of the West-Saxons. With real or affected modesty he refused; alleging his own incapacity, and the increasing multitudes of the Danes. His objections were over-ruled; the archbishop of Canterbury placed the crown on his head; and at the name of Alfred the hopes of the West-Saxons revived. The first care of the young monarch (he was only in his twenty-second year) was to perform with decent pomp the funeral of his late brother; and from this solemn ceremony he was summoned to arms and the field of battle. Another body of adventurers had joined the invaders stationed at Reading. The confederates penetrated into Wiltshire, and from their camp on the hills which cover the banks

* Asser, 19. 40—42.

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of the Willy, spread devastation over the surrounding country. Anxious to distinguish himself, the new king, at the head of his West-Saxons, advanced to seek a more numerous enemy. The impetuosity of the attack threw the Northmen into disorder: but they rallied from their flight, renewed the contest, and rather by superior numbers than superior valour, wrested the victory from the grasp of their opponents. The unfortunate issue of this battle gave a new direction to the policy of Alfred. He negotiated with the Danish chieftains, and induced them, probably by the offer of a valuable present, to withdraw out of his dominions *.

A. D. 872. From Wiltshire Halfdene led his barbarians to London, where he passed the winter. Burhred, the king of Mercia, taught by the example of Alfred, made them a liberal donative, and obtained a promise that they would march peaceably through his territories on their road to the north: but they halted at Torksey in Lincolnshire, and returned to their usual habits of depredation. Another present, and another treaty succeeded. The Danes derided the simplicity of the Mercian, and on a sudden, without pretext or provocation, surprised Repton on the southern bank of the Trent. This monastery, the pride of Mercian piety, they burnt to the ground: and violated the tombs of the princes whose ashes reposed within it.

A. D. 874. The following spring their numbers were doubled by the arrival of another horde of adventurers, under the united command of the kings Gothrun, Oskytul, and Amund. His knowledge of their force, joined to his experience of their perfidy, drove the Mercian king to despair. Unable to repel them by force, or to purchase their removal by money, he abandoned his throne, and proceeded, a reluctant pilgrim, to the tombs of the apostles at Rome. He arrived with a broken heart, died within a few days, and was buried in the church of the Saxon hospital. His

* Asser, 24, 25. Chron. Sax. 82.

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queen Ethelswitha followed her lord, but had not even the consolation of visiting his grave. She sickened and died at Ticino *.

By the retreat of Burhred, the Mercian sceptre was left at the disposal of the invaders. They placed it in the hands of Ceolwulf, a native thane, who had the pusillanimity to accept it from the enemies of his country, on the ignominious condition of paying them a yearly tribute, and of reigning in subservience to their will. This phantom of a king was but the pander to their rapacity. As long as he could extort money from his miserable countrymen, he was permitted to retain the sceptre: when he could no longer satisfy their demands, he was stripped of the ensigns of royalty, and suffered from their cruelty that death, which he owed to his country. He was the last who bore the title of king of Mercia †.

The whole of the Anglo-Saxon territories were now under the dominion of the invaders, with the exception of the districts on the south of the Thames, and the north of the Tyne. In 875, having arranged the plan of their future operations, they divided themselves into two bodies. The new adventurers with their three kings moved towards the south, and occupied Cambridge: Halfdene and his followers embarked on board their fleet in the Trent, steered along the coast of Deira, entered the Tyne, and ascended that river as far as the mouth of the Tame. Here they moored their fleet during the winter. Upon the first appearance of spring they issued forth to the work of devastation. Tynemouth was levelled with the ground. The abbey of Lindisfarne was plundered, and reduced to ashes; while the bishop and monks precipitately fled with their treasures and the body of St. Cuthbert to the highest of the Northumbrian mountains. At Coldingham the nuns, stimulated by the example of their abbess, disfigured their faces

A. D. 875.

* Asser, 26. Ingul. 26, 27.
† Asser, 26, 27. Ingul. 27. Chron. Sax. 82, 83.

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with wounds to escape the insults of the barbarians. They preserved their chastity; but perished in the flames which devoured their convent. Wherever Halfdene marched, his route might be traced by the smoking ruins of towns and villages, and the mangled remains of the victims of his barbarity. The summer he spent in ravaging the lands of the Strathclyde Britons, the Scots, and the Picts: in the autumn he returned into Bernicia, and, dividing it among his followers, exhorted them to cultivate by their industry that soil, which they had won by their valour *.

While Halfdene was thus consolidating his conquests in Northumbria, Gothrun with the southern army remained inactive for the space of twelve months in the neighbourhood of Cambridge. But one night the barbarians suddenly hastened to their fleet, embarked, and disappeared. Soon afterwards they were descried, steering towards the coast of Dorset, where they surprised the strong castle and monastery of Wareham, situated at the conflux of the Frome and the Piddle. From this station plundering parties were despatched in every direction, which, on the arrival of Alfred, retired within their intrenchments. In the art of besieging places the Saxons seem to have been conscious of their deficiency. They never refused to meet the enemy in the field; but from the day on which Ethelred was defeated before Reading, prudence had taught them to respect the Danish fortifications. Alfred attempted to negotiate: and Gothrun consented, for a considerable sum, to retire out of Wessex. Instructed, however, by the fate of Burhred, and not confiding in the sincerity of the Dane, the king demanded a certain number of hostages, and was permitted to select them from the noblest of the chieftains. He next required their oaths. They swore by their bracelets, which were sacred to

A. D. 876.

* Asser, p. 27. Chron. Sax. p. 83. Sim. Dunel. p. 95. Mat. West. ad ann. 870.

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Odin. He was not content. They swore by the relics of the Christian saints. Satisfied that he had bound them by every tie which his diffidence could devise, Alfred now expected their departure; when, in the darkness of the night, a detachment of the army sallied from the castle, surprised the Saxon cavalry, mounted the horses of the slain, and by a rapid march took possession of Exeter. The king, unable to dislodge them from either position, retired with shame and disappointment *.

In the fifth century the Saxons had been formidable for their power by sea: their conquests in Britain had directed their attention to other objects, and had annihilated their fleet. But Alfred now saw the necessity of opposing the Danes on their own element. In 875 he equipped a few ships, manned them with foreign adventurers, whom the hope of reward had allured to his service, and, trusting himself to the faith of these mercenaries, sailed in quest of an enemy. Fortune threw in his way a Danish fleet of seven ships, one of which he captured, while the others escaped. This trifling success elevated his hopes; ships and galleys were built; and by unceasing efforts, he at last succeeded in creating a navy. He had soon reason to congratulate himself on this acquisition. A resolution had been taken by the Northmen to evacuate Wareham. Their cavalry proceeded to join their friends at Exeter, and were followed by Alfred, who invested the place by land: the infantry embarked on board the fleet, and were directed to steer to the same city. But they had scarcely put to sea, before a storm compelled them to run along the coast of Hampshire, where they lost one half of their ships. The others, shattered by the tempest, recovered their course, but were opposed by the Saxon fleet, which blockaded the mouth of the Ex, and after a sharp action were entirely destroyed. The loss of one hundred and twenty sail induced Gothrun to treat in earnest. More hostages

A. D. 877.

* Asser, 27, 28. Chron. Sax. 83.

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were given, the former oaths were renewed, and the Northmen marched from Exeter into Mercia *.

It has been said that the character of Alfred was without a blemish. Such unqualified praise is the language of rhetorical declamation, rather than of historical truth. In his early years, indeed, his opening virtues endeared him to the nation †: and in a more advanced age he was the guardian and the benefactor of his country. But at the commencement of his reign there was much in his conduct to reprehend. The young monarch seems to have considered his high dignity as an emancipation from restraint; and to have found leisure, even amidst his struggles with the Danes, to indulge the impetuosity of his passions. The scandal of Wallingford may be dismissed with the contempt, which it perhaps deserves ‡: but we learn from more ancient authorities that his immorality and despotism provoked the censure of his virtuous kinsman St. Neot §; and Asser, his friend and panegyrist, acknowledges, that he was haughty to his subjects, neglected the administration of justice, and treated with contempt the complaints of the indigent and oppressed. It was to this *indiscretion* (to borrow the term under which the partiality of the biographer was willing to veil the misconduct of his patron ‖), that Alfred himself attributed the severe and unexpected calamity, which overwhelmed him in the eighth year of his reign. For the piety of the age, instead of tracing events to their political sources, referred them immediately to the providence of God; and considered misfor-

* Asser, p. 29. Chron. Sax. p. 84.

† Asser, p. 24. He adds that Alfred, had he been ambitious, might have obtained the crown from the favour of the people, to the exclusion of his elder brother.

‡ In primordiis regni sui vivebat luxui et vitiis subjugatus—virgines et caste vivere volentes vel invitas vel voluntarias omni studio subdere festinavit. Walling. p. 535.

§ Pravos redarguens actus jussit in melius converti.—De tyrannidis improbitate, ac de superba reginimis austeritate acriter cum increpavit. Vit. St. Neoti in act. SS. Ben. sæc. iv. tom. ii. p. 330, 331.

‖ Asser, p. 31, 32.

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tune as the instrument with which divine justice punished past enormities.

At the close of the last campaign we left him in the undisturbed possession of the kingdom of Wessex: at the beginning of the next year we discover him a solitary fugitive, lurking in the morasses of Somersetshire. This sudden revolution arose from the policy of Gothrun, the most artful of the Northmen That chieftain, on his retreat out of Wessex, had fixed his residence at Gloucester, and rewarded the services of his veterans by dividing among them the lands in the neighbourhood. But while this peaceful occupation seemed to absorb his attention, his mind was actively employed in arranging a plan of warfare, which threatened to extinguish the last of the Saxon governments in Britain A winter campaign had hitherto been unknown in the annals of Danish devastation: after their summer expeditions the invaders had always devoted the succeeding months to festivity and repose; and it is probable that the followers of Gothrun were as ignorant as the Saxons of the real design of their leader. On the first day of the year 878 they received an unexpected summons to meet him on horseback at an appointed place: on the night of the 6th of January they were in possession of Chippenham, a royal villa on the left bank of the Avon. There is reason to believe that Alfred was in the place, when the alarm was given: it is certain that he could not be at any great distance. From Chippenham, Gothrun dispersed his cavalry in different directions over the neighbouring counties: the Saxons were surprised by the enemy before they had heard of the war; and the king saw himself surrounded by the barbarians, without horses and almost without attendants. At first he conceived the rash design of rushing on the multitude of his enemies: but his temerity was restrained by the more considerate suggestions of his friends; and he consented to reserve himself for a less dangerous and more hopeful experiment. To elude suspicion he dis- A. D. 878.

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missed the few thanes who were still near his person, and endeavoured alone, and on foot, to gain the centre of Somersetshire. There he found a secure retreat in a small island, situated in a morass formed by the conflux of the Thone and the Parret, which was afterwards distinguished by the name of Ethelingey, or Prince's island *.

Though the escape of Alfred had disappointed the hopes of the Danes, they followed up their success with indefatigable activity. The men of Hampshire, Dorset, Wilts, and Berkshire, separated from each other, ignorant of the fate of their prince, and unprepared for any rational system of defence, saw themselves compelled to crouch beneath the storm. Those who dwelt near the coast, crossed with their families and treasure to the opposite shores of Gaul; the others sought to mitigate by submission the ferocity of the invaders, and by the surrender of a part, to preserve the remainder, of their property. One county alone, that of Somerset, is said

* To account for the sudden retreat of Alfred, and the temporary extinction of the West-Saxon power, has perplexed most historians. I shall not enumerate their different hypotheses, as the account given in the text satisfactorily, in my opinion, explains the whole difficulty: and is supported by authorities which seem to have been overlooked. "DCCCLXXVIII. "This year in mid-winter, over twelfth-night, the Danish army stole to "Chippenham; and rode over the West-Saxon land; and settled in it. "And much of the people they drove over sea, and of the rest the greater "part they rode round, and subjected to themselves, except the king Al- "fred, and he with a little band, went uneasily to the woods and the fast- "nesses of the moors."—Chron. Sax. 84. Their success was owing to their celerity, obequitando, Ethelw. f. 480.—Iter accelerans occidentales Anglicos attentavit invadere. In illis enim partibus didicerat a fugitivis ipsum regem hiemare. Rex autem Aluredus audiens barbaricam rabiem et sævitiam cominus irruisse, suorumque considerans dispositionem (*dispersionem*, MS. Claud. A. 5. p. 157), huc illucque cœpit animo fluctuare: tandem discretiore fretus arbitrio, cessit hostibus, ac solus et inermis fugæ est expositus ludibrio.—Vit. St. Neot. in Act. SS. Ben. sæc. iv. tom. ii. p. 333. This author proceeds to notice one of the adventures, which Alfred, it is said, delighted to narrate to the circle of his friends (Malms. de Reg. 23.) In his retreat he was entertained in the cottage of a swineherd: and his hostess, in the absence of her husband, desired the stranger to watch the loaves, which she was baking on the hearth. But Alfred's mind was too deeply occupied with the thought of his misfortunes to attend to the charge. The bread was burnt: and the negligence of the king was severely chastized by the tongue of the woman. This incident was soon sung in Latin verse.

Urere quos cernis panes, gyrare myraris,
Cum nimium gaudes hos manducasse calentes.—*Asser*, p. 31.

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to have continued faithful to the fortunes of Alfred; and yet, even in the county of Somerset, he was compelled to conceal himself at Ethelingey, while the ealdorman Æthelnoth with a few adherents wandered in the woods. By degrees the secret of the royal retreat was revealed: he was joined by the more trusty of his subjects; and in their company he occasionally issued from his concealment, intercepted the straggling parties of the Danes, and returned, loaded with the spoils, often of the enemy, sometimes (such was his hard necessity) of his own people. As his associates multiplied, these excursions were more frequent and successful; and at Easter, to facilitate the access to the island, he ordered a communication to be made with the land by a wooden bridge, of which he secured the entrance by the erection of a fort.

While the attention of Alfred was thus fixed on the enemy who had seized the eastern provinces of his kingdom, he was unconscious of the storm, which threatened to burst on him from the west. Another of the sons of Ragnar, probably the sanguinary Ubbo, with three-and-twenty sail, had lately ravaged the shores of Demetia or South Wales; and crossing to the northern coast of Devonshire, had landed his troops in the vicinity of Apledore. It appears as if the two brothers had previously agreed to crush the king between the pressure of their respective armies. Alarmed at this new debarkation, Odun the ealdorman, with several thanes, fled for security to the castle of Kynwith. It had no other fortification than a loose wall erected after the manner of the Britons; but its position on the summit of a lofty rock rendered it impregnable. The Danish leader was too wary to hazard an assault; and calmly pitched his tent at the foot of the mountain, in the confident expectation that the want of water would force the garrison to surrender. But Odun, gathering courage from despair, silently left his intrenchments at the dawn of morning; burst into the enemy's camp; slew the Danish chief with twelve hundred of his followers: and drove the remainder

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to their fleet. The bravery of the Saxons was rewarded with the plunder of Wales; and among the trophies of their victory was the Reafan, the mysterious standard of the raven, woven in one noon-tide by the hands of the three daughters of Ragnar. The superstition of the Danes was accustomed to observe the bird, as they marched to battle. If it appeared to flap its wings, it was a sure omen of victory: if it hung motionless in the air, they anticipated nothing but defeat.*

The news of this success infused courage into the hearts of the most pusillanimous. Alfred watched the reviving spirit of his people, and by trusty messengers invited them to meet him in the seventh week after Easter at the stone of Egbert, in the eastern extremity of Selwood forest†. On the appointed day the men of Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Somerset cheerfully obeyed the summons. At the appearance of Alfred, they hailed the avenger of their country; the wood echoed their acclamations; and every heart beat with the confidence of victory. But the place was too confined to receive the multitudes that hastened to the royal standard; and the next morning the camp was removed to Iceglea, a spacious plain, lying on the skirts of the wood, and covered by marshes in its front‡. The day was spent in making preparations for the conflict, and in assigning their places to the volunteers that hourly arrived: at the dawn of the next morning, Alfred marshalled his forces, and occupied the summit of Ethandune, a neighbouring and lofty eminence§. In the mean while Gothrun had not been an idle spectator of the motions of his adversary. He had recalled

* Chron. Sax. 84. Asser, 32.

† It is now called Brixton.—Ingulf (p. 26.) and some writers after him, inform us that the king disguised himself as a harper, and visited the Danish camp, where he observed their negligence, and learned their ulterior objects. The story is in itself improbable, and was unknown to Asser.

‡ It is believed to be Leigh, not far from Westbury. In the life of St. Neot it is described as grata salicis planities juxta silvam, p. 335.

§ Disposita seriatim acie proximum anticipaverunt promontorium. Hinc hostium explorabant occursum. Ibid. Anticipavit montem hostibus nimis aptum, si præcavissent. Wallicg. p. 538. This is probably Brattonhill, near Eddington.

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his scattered detachments, and was advancing with hasty steps to chastize the insolence of the insurgents*. As the armies approached, they vociferated shouts of mutual defiance; and after the first discharge of their missive weapons rushed to a closer and more sanguinary combat. The shock of the two nations, the efforts of their leaders, the fluctuations of victory, and the alternate hopes and fears of the contending armies, must be left to the imagination of the reader. The Danes displayed a courage worthy of their former renown, and their repeated conquests. The Saxons were stimulated by every motive that could influence the heart of man. Shame, revenge, the dread of subjugation, and the hope of independence, impelled them forward: their perseverance bore down all opposition; and the Northmen, after a most obstinate but unavailing resistance, fled in crowds to their camp. The pursuit was not less murderous than the engagement: the Saxons immolated to their resentment every fugitive who fell into their hands. Immediately, by the king's orders, lines were drawn round the encampment; and the escape of the survivors was rendered impracticable by the vigilance and the multitude of their enemies. Famine and despair subdued the obstinacy of Gothrun, who on the fourteenth day offered to capitulate. The terms imposed by the conqueror were; that the king and principal chieftains should embrace Christianity; that they should entirely evacuate his dominions; and that they should bind themselves to the fulfilment of the treaty by the surrender of hostages and by their oaths. After a few weeks, Gothrun with thirty of his officers was baptized at Aulre near Athelney He took the surname of Athelstan, and

* Gytrus undique Danos convocatis, manum magnam contraxit. Waling. Ibid. Ut rumor hujus eventus latissime diffusus profanas Gytronis attingeret aures——protinus juxta morem suum acies disposuerunt, ad locum certaminis castra moventes. Vit. St. Neot. p. 335. These passages plainly show that the Danes were not surprised by Alfred, as is generally asserted. See also Translat. St. Cuth. in act. SS. Bened. sæc. iv. tom. ii p. 279.

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Alfred was his sponsor. After the ceremony both princes removed to Wedmore, where on the eighth day Gothrun put off the white robe and chrysmal fillet, and on the twelfth bad adieu to his adopted father, whose generosity he had now learned to admire as much as he had before respected his valour. From Chippenham he marched into Mercia, fixed his head quarters at Cirencester, and ordered his followers to cultivate the soil. He remained here but twelve months, when he returned to his former kingdom of East Anglia; and though a Danish armament under the command of Hastings entered the Thames, and solicited him to renew the war, he adhered faithfully to his engagements. Two treaties which he made with Alfred are still extant. By the first the boundaries between the two kingdoms are determined to be the Thames, the river Lee to its source, and a line drawn thence to Bedford, and along the Ouse as far as the Watlingstreet, and thence probably to the mouth of the river. The lives of Englishmen and Danes are declared to be of equal value: and all unauthorised intercourse between the two nations is forbidden. By the second the two kings engage to promote Christianity, and to punish apostacy; the laws of the Danes are assimilated to those of the Saxons; and the fines payable for offences are determined both in Saxon and Danish money*. The followers of Gothrun gradually adopted the habits of civilized life; and by acquiring an interest in the soil, contributed to protect it from the ravages of subsequent adventurers.

A. D. 880. The retreat of Gothrun gave to Wessex a long respite from the horrors of war, and fifteen years of comparative tranquillity left Alfred at leisure to attend to the improvement and civilization of his people. The army claimed his first care. The desultory but incessant at-

* Leg. Sax. 47. 51. In the original the line of demarcation ends at the Watlingstreet; but, as the province of East-Anglia had been ceded to Gothrun, Spelman is of opinion that it proceeded thence to the mouth of the river. Vit. Ælfr. 36.

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tacks of the Danes had demon trated the necessity of organizing a force, which should be ready to take the field at the first alarm, and to march to any point of the coast that was menaced with an attack; but at the same time the scarcity, arising from the frequent suspensions of agricultural labour, showed the impolicy of collecting together the great mass of the population. Alfred adopted an improved plan: which, while it was calculated to oppose a formidable force to the descents of the Northmen, secured a sufficient supply of hands for the cultivation of the soil. The defence of the towns and cities was intrusted to the courage and fidelity of the inhabitants under the direction of the king's Gerefa or reeve: of the rest of the free population the males were divided into two classes, to each of which was allotted in rotation a regular term of service. They were commanded by the king or the ealdorman of the county: and instead of pay, received from the national stores a proportionate supply of provisions *.

The utility of fortifications had been sufficiently demonstrated by the example of the Danes, and the successful defence of Kynwith. By the orders of Alfred a survey was made of the coast and navigable rivers; and castles were built in places the best fitted to prevent the landing, or to impede the progress of an enemy. Yet in this undertaking, of which the necessity was so apparent, he had to encounter numerous difficulties, arising from the prejudices and indolence of his people. In many instances the execution of the royal orders was postponed: in others the buildings were abandoned as soon as the foundations had been laid. But occasional descents of the Danes came in aid of the king's authority: those who had lost their property by their negligence, were eager to repair the fault by their industry; and before the close of his reign Alfred had the satisfaction to see more than fifty castles built according to his directions †.

* Chron. Sax. p. 92, 93. † Asser, p. 59, 60. Spelm. Vit. Alfred. p. 129. not.

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The first attempt which the king made to create a navy has been already mentioned. His success stimulated him to new exertions; and, to acquire knowledge, and to do honour to the naval profession, he often ac-
A. D. companied his squadrons in their expeditions. On one
883. of these occasions he met four sail of Northmen. Two were captured by boarding, and their crews put to the sword: the commanders of the other two, terrified by the fate of their companions and their own loss, threw down their arms, and on their knees solicited mercy. On
A. D. another occasion the Saxon fleet surprised and captured
885 thirteen sail in the river Stour. Every man on board was massacred: but the same evening the victors in their return were intercepted by a Danish squadron, and completely defeated *. As soon as the king became acquainted with the arts of attack and the modes of defence practised by the northern nations, several improvements suggested themselves to his superior sagacity. He ordered ships to be built of larger dimensions than those of the Danes. Their decks were higher, and their length double. The increased elevation gave his mariners an advantage over their enemies, who were compelled to direct their strokes upwards: and the greater bulk of the vessels added to their stability in the water, while the Danish ships were agitated by the slightest motion. That their celerity might not be retarded by the additional weight, he augmented the number of the rowers; and gave to all his vessels thirty, to several more than thirty, oars on a side. This fleet was so judiciously disposed in the different harbours, that the marauding squadrons of the barbarians found it difficult to approach, or to abandon, the shore with impunity †.

From measures of defence against a foreign enemy, the king turned his attention to the domestic economy of the country. During the long period of Danish devastation, the fabric of civil government had been nearly

* Asser, 36, 37. Chron. Sax. 86, 87. † Chron. Sax. 98.

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dissolved. The courts of judicature had been closed: injuries were inflicted without provocation, and retaliated without mercy; and the Saxon, like the Dane, had imbibed a spirit of insubordination, and a contempt for peace, and justice, and religion. To remedy these evils, Alfred restored, enlarged, and improved the salutary institutions of his forefathers; and from the statutes of Ethelbert, Ina, Offa, and other Saxon princes, composed a code of law, adapted to the circumstances of the time, and the habits of his subjects*. But legislative enactments would have been of little avail, had not the king insured their execution, by an undertaking of no small difficulty, but which by his vigilance and perseverance he ultimately accomplished. The Saxon jurisprudence had established an ample gradation of judicatures, which diverged in different ramifications from the king's court into every hamlet in the kingdom: but of the persons invested with judicial authority very few were qualified for so important an office. Almost all were ignorant: many were despotic. The powerful refused to acquiesce in their decisions; and the defenceless complained of their oppression. Both had frequent recourse to the equity of Alfred, who listened as cheerfully to the complaints of the lowest as of the highest among his subjects Every appeal was heard by him with the most patient attention: in cases of importance he revised the proceedings at his leisure; and the inferior magistrates trembled at the impartiality and severity of their sovereign. If their fault proceeded from ignorance or inadvertence, they were reprimanded or removed according to the magnitude of the offence; but neither birth, nor friends, nor power, could save the corrupt or malicious judge†. He was made to suffer the punishment which he had unjustly inflicted; and, if we may believe an ancient authority, forty-four magistrates were by the king's order executed in one year for their informal and

* Leg. Sax. 28—46. † Asser, 61-71.

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iniquitous proceedings *. This severity was productive of the most beneficial consequences. The judges were careful to acquire a competent degree of knowledge; their decisions became accordant to the law; the commission of crime was generally followed by the infliction of punishment; and theft and murder were rendered as rare, as they had formerly been prevalent. To prove the reformation of his subjects, Alfred is said to have suspended valuable bracelets on the highway, which no one ventured to remove: and as a confirmation we are told, that if a traveller lost his purse on the road, he would at the distance of a month find it lying untouched in the same spot †. These are probably the fictions of a posterior age: but they serve to shew the high estimation in which Alfred's administration of justice was held by our forefathers.

The decline of learning in the Saxon states had been rapidly accelerated by the Danish invasions. The churches and monasteries, the only academies of the age, had been destroyed; and at the accession of Alfred, Wessex could hardly boast of a single scholar, able to translate a Latin book into the English tongue ‡. The king, who from his early years had been animated with the most ardent passion for knowledge, endeavoured to infuse a similar spirit into all who aspired to his favour. For this purpose he invited to his court the most distinguished scholars of his own and of foreign countries.

* Miroir des Justices, p. 296. ed. 1642. It was written by Andrew Horne, under Edward I. or Edward II., and, though of questionable authority, must have been composed from more ancient documents. Some of the cases are curious. Thus Athulf was executed because he had condemned Copping, who was not twenty-one years of age: Billing, because he had condemned Leston, who did not sit down, when proclamation had been made for all but the murderer to sit down: Hale, because he had acquitted the sheriff Tristram, though Tristram had unjustly seized goods for the king's use: Therborn, because he had condemned Osgot for a crime, of which he had obtained pardon from the king: Oskitell, because he had condemned Cutling on the sole report of the coroner. Thus also he imprisoned Sithing, because that officer had imprisoned Herbole for a crime committed by Herbole's wife: he ordered Haulf to lose a hand, because he had not inflicted that punishment on Armoc, &c. p. 296—301.

† Malms. de Reg. ii. 4. f. 23.

‡ Alfred, præf. ad Past. p. 82. Wise's Asser.

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Plegmund and Werfrith, Ethelstan and Werwulf visited him from Mercia. John of old Saxony left the monastery of Corbie for an establishment at Ethelingey: Asser of St. David's was induced by valuable presents to reside with the king during six months in the year; and an honourable embassy to Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, returned with Grimbald the celebrated provost of St. Omer*. With their assistance Alfred began in his thirty-ninth year to apply to the study of Roman literature; and opened schools in different places for the instruction of his subjects. It was his will that the children of every free-man, whose circumstances would allow it, should acquire the elementary arts of reading and writing; and that those, who were designed for civil or ecclesiastical employments, should moreover be instructed in the Latin language†.

It was a misfortune which the king frequently lamented, that Saxon literature contained no books of science. "I have often wondered," says he, "that the "illustrious scholars, who once flourished among the "English, and who had read so many foreign works, "never thought of transferring the most useful into "their own language‡." To supply the deficiency Alfred himself undertook the task. Of his translations two were historical, and two didactic. The first were the ecclesiastical history of the English by Bede, and the epitome of Orosius, the best abridgment of ancient history then extant, both works calculated to excite and gratify the curiosity of his subjects. Of the others one

* Asser, 46—49. Epist. Fulconis in Wise's Asser, p. 123. John, abbot of Ethelingey, has been often confounded with Joannes Scotus Erigena. They were different persons. Scotus, as his name imports, was a native of Ireland; John the abbot was a native of old Saxony (Asser, 61.) Scotus was neither priest nor monk (Mabillon, sæc. iv. tom. ii. p. 510). John the abbot was both priest and monk. (Asser, 47—61. Ælfredi præf. ad Past. p. 85.)

† Ælfred. præf. ad Past. p. 85. Asser, 43—55. Did he not at this time establish the university of Oxford? I know not. The contested passage in Asser (p. 52) appears to me undoubtedly spurious. What writer of the ninth or tenth centuries ever used the expressions, Divus Petrus, or Divi Gildas, Melkinus, &c.

‡ Ælfred. præf. ad Past. p. 84.

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was meant for general reading, "the Consolation of Philosophy," by Boetius, a treatise deservedly held in high estimation at that period; and the second was destined for the instruction of the clergy, the Pastoral of Gregory the Great, a work recommended both by its own excellence, and the reputation of its author. Of this he sent a copy to every bishop in his dominions, with a request that it might be preserved in the cathedral for the use of the diocesan clergy*.

In the arrangement of his time, his finances, and his domestic concerns, Alfred was exact and methodical. The officers of his household were divided into three bodies, which succeeded each other in rotation, and departed at the end of the month, the allotted period of their service†. Of each day he gave one third to sleep and necessary refreshments: the remainder was divided between the duties of his station, and works of piety and charity‡. His treasurer was ordered to separate his revenue into two moieties. The first he subdivided into three parts, of which one was destined to reward his servants and ministers, another to supply presents for the strangers who visited his court, and the third to pay the numerous bodies of workmen whom he employed. For he erected palaces in different parts of his dominions; repaired and embellished those which had been left by his predecessors, and rebuilt London and several other towns, which the Danes had reduced to heaps of

* Alfred. præf. ad Past. p. 86. On each copy was an *æstell* of fifty mancuses, and the king requested that no one would "take the æstell from the book, nor the book from the minster." The meaning of the word æstell has hitherto proved a stumbling-block to the commentators. My notion is, that it was the case containing the book. † Asser, 65.

‡ Malm. 24, 25. Asser, 67. Without the knowledge of chronometers, Alfred was perplexed to discover the true hour of the day. To remedy the inconvenience he had recourse to the following simple expedient. By repeated experiments he found that a quantity of wax, weighing seventy-two pennies, might be made into six candles, each twelve inches long and of equal thickness, and that these burning in succession, would last exactly twenty-four hours. To prevent the flame from being affected by currents of air, the candles were inclosed in a large lantern of transparent horn: and as the combustion of each inch of wax corresponded with the lapse of one seventy-second part of the day, or twenty of our minutes, he was hence enabled to measure his time with some accuracy Asser, 68, 69.

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ruins. In all these undertakings we are told that he displayed an improved taste and considerable magnificence. Among his artists were numbers of foreigners attracted by his offers, and the fame of his liberality; and by frequent conversation with them he is said to have acquired a theoretical acquaintance with their respective professions, which astonished the most experienced workmen *.

The other moiety of his revenue was parcelled out into four portions. One was devoted to the support of his school, his favourite project. Another was given to the two monasteries which he had founded, one at Shaftesbury for nuns, at the head of whom he placed his daughter Ethelgiva: another at Ethelingey for monks, which he peopled with foreigners, because the Danish devastations had abolished the monastic institute among his own subjects. The third portion he employed in relieving the necessities of the indigent, to whom he was on all occasions a most bountiful benefactor. From the fourth he drew the alms, which he annually distributed to different churches. They were not confined to his own dominions, but scattered through Wales, Northumbria, Armorica, and Gaul. Often he sent considerable presents to Rome; sometimes to the nations in the Mediterranean and to Jerusalem: on one occasion to the Indian Christians at Meliapour. Swithelm, the bearer of the royal alms, brought back to the king several oriental pearls, and aromatic liquors †.

The long interval of peace, which Alfred enjoyed after the baptism of Gothrun, had raised him to a high preeminence among the British princes. The East-Anglian and Northumbrian Danes, though their subjection was rather nominal than real, acknowledged his authority.

* Asser, 52. 58. 66.

† See Asser. 58. 60. 64. 66, 67. Chron Sax. p. 86. 90. Malm. de gest. reg 24. Hunt. 201. Flor. Wigor. 591. It is curious that as Asser (p. 58) makes the mare Tyrrhenum extend "ad ultimum Hyberniæ finem," so Alfred in his translation of Orosius says of the same, or the Wendelsæ, that 'on hyre west ende is Scotland."

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The kingdom of Mercia no longer existed. He had given the government of that country with his daughter Æthelflæd to the ealdorman Ethered. Even the kings of the Welsh, Anaward of Gwynez, Hemeid of Demetia, Helised of Brecon, Howel of Gleguising, and Brocmail of Gwent, harassed by intestine dissensions, voluntarily placed themselves under his protection, and did him
A. D. homage on the same terms as Ethered of Mercia*. It
893. was in this season of prosperity that Alfred saw the storm, which had so long desolated the fairest provinces of Gaul, cross the channel, and burst on his own territory. Hastings, the most renowned and successful of the sea-kings, after more than forty years of carnage and plunder, undertook, in imitation of Gothrun, to win for himself a kingdom in Britain. The forces of the Northmen assembled in the port of Boulogne in two divisions, of which one, comprising two hundred and fifty sail, steered its course to the mouth of the Limene, and took possession of Apuldre on the Rother†; the other of eighty ships, under Hastings himself, directing its course more to the north, entered the Swale, and fortified a position at Milton. Never did Alfred display more ability, nor the barbarians more pertinacity, than in the conduct of this war. Every attempt of the invaders was foiled by the foresight and expedition of their adversary: yet they maintained the contest for more than three years: and did not abandon their object, till they had exhausted every resource, which courage or perfidy, activity or patience could supply.

As soon as Alfred collected his forces, he marched into Kent, and occupied a strong position between Milton and Apuldre. From a lofty eminence he could watch the motions of his enemies, while his flanks were secured from surprise by an extensive wood on the one

* Asser, 49, 50. Now that Mercia was subject to the king of Wessex, we meet with the compound term of Anglo-Saxon — Ælfredus Angulsaxonum rex. Asser, 25.

† There was formerly a river and spacious harbor of this name. Neither is at present in existence, owing to inundations. The spot is now called Romney Marsh. See Gibson, at the end of the Saxon Chronicle, p. 34.

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side, and a deep morass on the other. Thus the communication between the Northmen was intercepted; and each army was compelled to remain inactive in its camp, or, if it ventured a forward movement, to expose itself to probable destruction. The perfidy of Hastings disengaged him from this embarrassing situation. He offered to depart in consideration of a sum of money; gave hostages for the performance of his engagement; and, as a spontaneous proof of his sincerity, permitted his two sons to receive the sacrament of baptism. To one Alfred, to the other Ethered, stood sponsors *. But in the meantime a part of the army at Apuldre eluded the vigilance of the king, stole through the forest of Andredswald, and began to ravage the counties of Wessex. At Farnham they were overtaken by Alfred and his son Edward. The Saxons were victorious: the booty and horses of the barbarians fell into their hands; and many of the fugitives perished, as they attempted to cross the Thames without a knowledge of the fords. In the action their king, whose name is unknown, had received a severe wound; and his inability to bear the rapidity of their flight, compelled them to halt in Thorney, a narrow islet formed by the waters of the Coln. There they were carefully watched by successive parties of Saxons, till they obtained permission to depart on terms similar to those, which had been stipulated with Hastings †.

The open hostility of these adventurers was not more formidable than the suspicious fidelity of their countrymen, who under Gothrun and Cuthred had formerly settled in East-Anglia and Northumbria. Both these princes were now dead, and neither hosts nor hostages could secure the obedience of their former retainers. Some time before the evacuation of Thorney, Alfred had

* Chron. Sax. 94. Hunt. 201. West. 178.

† Ibid. 93. Ethelwerd, 482. This island is generally supposed to be the Mersey, at the mouth of the Coln in Essex. But Ethelwerd calls it Thorney: and from the situation I should conceive it to have been formed by the river Coln, which enters the Thames near Staines.

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received intelligence that these faithless vassals had equipped two powerful fleets, with one of which they were besieging Exeter, while the other ravaged the
A. D. northern shore of Devon. To add to his perplexity the
894. perfidy of Hastings was now become manifest. He had indeed abandoned Milton, but it was only to cross the river, and take possession of Beamfleet on the coast of Essex, where he had been joined by the fleet from Apuldre In this emergency the king divided his forces. With the cavalry he hastened to Exeter, and drove the besiegers to their ships: Ethered with the remainder surprised Beamfleet in the absence of Hastings, and obtained possession of his treasures, his wife, and his children. This loss humbled the pride of the barbarian: he solicited a pacification: Alfred, in opposition to the advice of his council, ordered the prisoners to be restored; and Hastings promised to leave the island for ever *. Whether he performed his engagement we are not told: but from this moment he disappears from the pages of the Saxon annalists; and before the close of the century we find him in France, pursuing his usual career of devastation. At last he accepted from Charles the Simple the city and territory of Chartres, and condescended to become the vassal of a throne, which he had so often shaken to its foundation †.

However this may be, the adventurers from Apuldre and the fugitives from Thorney took possession of Shobury on the coast of Essex; and their numbers were increased by the arrival of auxiliaries from East-Anglia and Northumbria. On a sudden, leaving a sufficient garrison for the defence of the place, they burst from their cantonments, swept with rapidity the left bank of the Thames, crossed the country to the Severn, and plundered without opposition both sides of that river. At the first alarm the men of Mercia and Wessex, and the Britons of Wales, hastened to oppose the depredators, who at

* Chron. Sax 93, 94. Flor. 596.
† Wil. Gemet. 221, 228. Bouquet, vii. 221. 228.

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Buttington found themselves surrounded by three armies under Ethered, Athelm, and Ethelnoth For several weeks they supported with patience the hardships of a siege: but, as soon as their horses were devoured, famine compelled them to make a desperate attempt, and with immense loss they forced a way through their enemies, traversed Mercia, and regained their fortress at Shobury. Here they reposed themselves till their losses were repaired by the arrival of new adventurers; and then, bursting like a torrent through Mercia, they took possession of Chester and the Wirall. Alfred was at the time cruising with his fleet in the channel. He hastened to the Wirall; but when he had examined the position of the enemy, he despaired of being able to force their lines, and contented himself with driving away the cattle, and destroying the corn in the neighbourhood. Famine compelled the barbarians to seek new adventures. They ravaged North Wales: but finding the royal army in their way, suddenly returned, directed their march through Northumbria into East-Anglia, and by that circuitous route, regained their former station in Essex. It might have been expected that, after so many failures, they would have abandoned the island. Alfred heard with pleasure that they had put to sea with their families and plunder: but in a few days they were discovered in the Thames near London, and steering their course up the Lea, selected a strong position about twenty miles from that capital, and made it their head quarters during the winter *.

In the ensuing spring, the citizens, harassed by the neighbourhood of the Danes, attempted to storm their intrenchments, but were repulsed with considerable slaughter. To protect the harvest, Alfred encamped on the banks of the Lea, and, as he was riding one day, discovered a spot, in which, by diverting the course of the water, and raising obstructions in the bed of the

* Chron Sax. 94—96.

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river, it was easy to prevent the egress of the enemy's fleet. The work was soon completed, and for its protection a castle was erected on each bank. The Northmen, foiled by the king's ingenuity, abandoned their position; and, though they were pursued by the Saxon cavalry, reached Quatbridge* on the Severn. Here they passed the winter without molestation. But their spirit was broken: dissension prevailed among their leaders;
A.D. 897. and in the spring they disbanded themselves, separating into small bodies, and taking different directions. Many obtained settlements among the East-Anglians and Northumbrians: the remainder sailed to their countrymen on the banks of the Seine†.

But though the great body of the barbarians had retired from the contest, several small marauding parties continued to hover round the coast, and often inflicted the most serious injuries on the inhabitants. On one occasion six Danish vessels were seen to enter the strait between the Isle of Wight and the coast of Hampshire; and were quickly pursued by a Saxon squadron of nine sail. The Northmen had divided their force. Three of their ships lay dry on the beach, while the crews were employed in the pursuit of plunder: the other three rode at anchor to receive the attack of the Saxons. In the unequal contest which followed, two of these were captured: the third with only five men on board contrived to escape to a port in East-Anglia. The engagement was hardly terminated when the Danes returned from their expedition on shore; and the ebbing of the tide left all the English vessels aground, three near to the enemy, the other six at a considerable distance. This accident awakened the hopes of the barbarians, who fearlessly crossed the sands on foot, and made an attack on the nearest vessels. In this bold though unsuccessful attempt they lost one hundred and twenty men: and yet by their superior skill were the first to get off their

* Quatbridge is probably Quatford, near Bridgenorth.
† Chron. Sax. 96, 97.

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ships and put to sea. One of the three escaped: the others were driven on the coast of Sussex, where their crews were seized, and executed as pirates. During the summer no fewer than twenty Danish vessels were captured *.

The death of Alfred happened on the 26th of October, A. D. in the year 901. . . : He left two sons, Edward, who 901. succeeded him, and Ethelwerd, who received from his father a learned education, and whose sons perished at the celebrated battle of Brunanburgh.† His daughters were Ethelflæd, married to Ethered of Mercia, Ethelgiva abbess of Shaftesbury, and Alfritha, wedded to Baldwin count of Flanders, the son of the celebrated Judith.

The will of Alfred is deserving of notice from the interesting information which it affords respecting the transmission of property among the Saxons. Egbert had entailed his estates on his male descendants to the exclusion of females: "to the spear-side and not to the "spindle-side." With Ethelwulf's disposition of his lands the reader is already acquainted: but when Ethelbert came to the throne, he prevailed on his brothers, Ethelred and Alfred, to surrender to him their interest in the joint estate created by Ethelwulf in their favor, on condition that he should reconvey it to them at his death, together with all such lands as he might acquire for himself.‡ On the accession of Ethelred, it was agreed at first, that the king should possess the joint inheritance during his life, and make Alfred his sole heir; but, by a second agreement, each party was permitted to make provision for his children out of his personal property, and the lands which he had obtained by particular grants from

* Chron. Sax. 98, 99.

† This Ethelwerd, who died in 922 (Flor. 602), has generally been confounded with Ethelwerd the historian, who wrote in the reign of Edward the martyr, and who says expressly that he was descended not from Alfred, but from Alfred's brother and predecessor Ethered. — Ethelw. præf. 473.

‡ It appears to me that semana *company* refers to their joint tenancy, not joint concurrence.

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his father, or by sale or gift from other persons, reserving the residue, together with their joint inheritance, to the survivor. Alfred, having stated these particulars, informs us, that in order to dispose by will of what belonged to him by the death of Ethered, he assembled the thanes of Wessex at Langdon. "I prayed them," he adds, "for my love (and gave them security that I "would never bear them ill-will for speaking justly) not "to be prevented by fear or love from deciding right· "lest any man should say that I had defrauded my "kinsfolks." The thanes approved his title to the property. "It is all," said they, "delivered there into thy "hand. Therefore thou mayest bequeath and give it "either to a relation or a stranger, as thou thinkest "best." The next day the king in their presence revoked all his former wills, divided his lands among his two sons, his three daughters, his two nephews, his cousin Osferth, and his wife Alswitha *. He then left sums of money to all the above, to his ealdormen, to his servants, and his bishops: fifty mancuses of gold to fifty priests, fifty to poor clerks or monks, ministers of God, fifty to poor people in distress, and fifty to the church in which he should be buried. At the end he strictly forbade his heirs to invade the liberty of those men, whom he had made free. "For God's love, and for the benefit "of my soul, I will that they be masters of their own free-"dom, and of their own will; and in the name of the liv-"ing God I entreat that no man disturb them by exaction "of money or in any other manner: but that they be left "at liberty to serve any lord whom they may choose."

EDWARD.

The succession of Edward was opposed by his cousin Ethelwald, who claimed the crown as the representative

* If any of the lands which he left to females had descended to him from Egbert, he desired his heirs male to take the lands, and give to the females an equivalent in money.

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of Ethelred, the elder brother of the late monarch. His pretensions were overruled by the decision of the Witenagemot: and the discontented prince, apparently under pretence of recovering the hereditary patrimony of his father, assembled his retainers, and occupied the castles of Christchurch and Winburn. In the latter place he forcibly married a nun out of the convent, and announced his resolution never to surrender the fortress but with his life. The approach of Edward to Badberry suggested a less hazardous policy. He retired in secrecy, and reached the northern Danes, who pitying his misfortunes, or admiring his spirit, gave him the title of king, and hastened to fight under his banner. In a short time the exile saw himself at the head of an army of adventurers from Northumbria, East-Anglia and France.* With these he landed in Essex, and obtained possession of that county. The next year he marched through Mercia, crossed the Thames at Cricklade, and pillaged the greater part of Wiltshire. But at the approach of Edward he retired: and the West-Saxons in their turn retaliated on the Danes the injuries, which they had inflicted on Mercia and Wessex. From St. Edmund's dyke in Cambridgeshire they spread the flames of war to the mouth of the Ouse: and crossing that river, continued in the fenny country the work of devastation. At last Edward thought proper to withdraw his army. In defiance of repeated orders the men of Kent remained behind: they were surrounded by the Danes; and a most murderous conflict ensued. Two ealdormen, several thanes, two abbots, and the greater number of the common men perished, but the East-Anglians purchased their advantage at a high price. They lost their king Eohric; and to Edward the death of Ethelwald was of greater consequence than the most brilliant victory*.

A. D. 904.

* That he had with him adventurers from France, is plain from Wendover i. 368: Transfetavit ad Gallias, ut fortiore redieus militе regem inquietaret.
† Chron. Sax. 100. Hunt. f. 202. West. 180.

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From this period the king's attention was principally directed to two great objects, the union of Mercia with his own dominions, and the subjugation of the Northumbrian and East-Anglian Danes. I. For a few years the government of Mercia, during the frequent infirmities of Ethered, was intrusted to the hands of Ethelfled, a princess whose masculine virtues and martial exploits are celebrated in the highest strains of panegyric by our ancient historians. At the death of her husband, Edward seized and united to Wessex the two important cities of London and Oxford; nor does Ethelfled appear to have resented this partition of her territory. She continued to govern the remainder with the title of the lady of Mercia, and cordially supported her brother in all his operations against the common enemy. But that respect, which Edward had paid to the merit of his sister, he refused to the weakness of his niece Elfwina. When Ethelfled died in 920, he pretended that the young princess had promised marriage to Reynold the Dane, and entering Mercia at the head of his army, sent her an honourable captive into Wessex, abolished every trace of a separate government, and moulded the whole of the Saxon territories into one undivided kingdom *.

A. D. 910. II. Had the Danes in England been united under the same monarch, they would probably have been more than a match for the whole power of Edward: but they still preserved the manners and spirit of their ancestors, and diminished their national strength by dividing it among a number of equal and independent chieftains. After the death of Ethelwald five years elapsed without any important act of hostility; in 910, Edward conducted his forces into Northumbria, and spent five weeks in ravaging the country, and collecting slaves and plunder. The next year the Northmen returned the visit. They penetrated to the Avon, and thence into Gloucestershire; but in their retreat were overtaken by the Saxons, and suffered a defeat, which was

* Chron. Sax. 103, 107. Ingulf. 28. Caradoc. 47.

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long a favourite subject among the national poets. Edward now adopted the plan, which had been so successfully pursued by his father, of building fortresses for the defence of his dominions, and the annoyance of the enemy. A line drawn from the mouth of the Thames, through Bedfordshire, to Chester, will pretty accurately describe the boundary which separated the hostile nations. To curb the East-Anglians the king built Witham and Hertford: while Ethelfled, at his suggestion, erected similar fortresses at Bridgenorth, Tamworth, Stafford, Warwick, and other places in the vicinity. Their utility was soon demonstrated in the failure of a Danish expedition from the coast of Armorica. After ravaging the shores of Wales, the barbarians attempted to penetrate into Herefordshire. They were opposed by the inhabitants of the neighbouring burghs, driven into a wood, and compelled to give hostages, as a security for their peaceable departure. Edward was, however, suspicious of their honour, and lined the northern coast of Somersetshire with troops. As he expected, they made two attempts to land in the night at Wachet and at Portlock, and were defeated at both places with considerable slaughter. The survivors fled to one of the uninhabited isles in the mouth of the Severn, but want compelled them to abandon their asylum, and seek new adventures in Wales and Ireland *.

The royal brother and sister, having thus provided for the security of their own territories, proceeded to attack those of their enemies. Ethelfled took Derby by storm, though the Danes obstinately defended themselves in the streets; and then laid siege to Leicester, which, with the adjacent territory, was subdued by the terror of her arms. Edward, on his side, built two forts at Buckingham to overawe the Northmen of the adjoining counties, took Bedford by capitulation, and, advancing into Northamptonshire, fortified Towcester. The Danes, alarmed A. L. 919.

* Chron. Sax. 102. 105.

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A. D. 921. at the progressive encroachments of the Saxons, made, in the same year, four attempts to obtain possession of the nearest fortresses. One party occupied Tempsford, and besieged Bedford; another stormed the walls of Towcester; a third attacked Wigingamere, and a fourth surrounded Malden. In each instance the garrisons defended themselves till the royal army came to their assistance; and Edward, eager to improve his success, took possession of Huntingdon and Colchester. The Danes were dispirited by so many losses; and all their chieftains from the Willand in Northamptonshire to the mouth of the Thames, submitted to the conqueror, took the oaths of allegiance, and acknowledged him for their "lord and protector *."

During the three next years the king with unceasing industry pursued the same line of policy. He successively carried his arms to every part of the ancient boundary of Mercia, and erected fortresses at Manchester, at Thelwell on the left bank of the Mersey, at Nottingham, and at Stamford; and by the severity with which he punished every outbreak, tamed into submission the several bands of barbarians who had settled in the island. By these conquests Edward acquired more real power than had ever been possessed by his predecessors. All the tribes from Northumbria to the channel formed but one kingdom, subject to his immediate control: while the other nations in the island, warned by the fate of their neighbours, anxiously solicited his friendship. The Danes and Angles of the north made him offers of submission: the kings of the Scots and Strath-clyde Britons chose him for their "lord "and father;" and the princes of Wales paid him a yearly tribute. Yet he was not long permitted to enjoy this pre eminence. He died in 825 at Farrington, and his death was immediately followed by that of his eldest son Ethelward, at Oxford †.

A. D. 924.

* To hlaforde and to mund-boran. Chron. Sax. 169. Also, 106—109.

† Chron. Sax. 111. The chronicle tells us that Edward built a town and fortified it at Badecanwyllan in Peacland, which Gibson conceives to be

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Edward had been thrice married, and left a numerous family. Of the sons who survived him, three successively ascended the throne, Athelstan, Edmund, and Edred. Six of his daughters were married to foreign princes, some of them the most powerful sovereigns in Europe: and three, Elfleda, Ethelhilda, and Eadburga, embraced a religious life. Of Eadburga the early history is curious. She was the youngest of Edward's children, and had been led by her father, when she was about three years old, into a room, in which he had previously placed a collection of female trinkets, and a chalice with the book of the gospels. The child ran to the latter, and Edward, interpreting her choice as the destination of heaven, embraced her and exclaimed: "Thou shalt be gratified in thy wishes; nor will thy "parents regret, if they yield to thee in virtue." She was delivered to the care of her grandmother Alswitha, and of the nuns at Winchester; with whom she spent a long course of years, eminent among the sisters for her humility and devotion *.

In legislative and literary merit Edward was much inferior to his father: he surpassed him in the magnitude and the durability of his conquests. The subjection of the Danes to Alfred was only nominal; and at his death the kingdom, which he left to his son, was bounded by the Mercian counties on the banks of the Thames and the Severn. Edward, by steadily pursuing the same object, and insuring the submission of each district before he proceeded to further conquests, extended his rule over all the Danes of Mercia and East-Anglia. Wherever he penetrated, he selected a strong position, and while a multitude of workmen surrounded it with a wall of

Bakewell in Derbyshire. I think that Peacland means Lothian, which according to Camden was anciently called Pictland (Brit. p. 1181), and would therefore seek Badecanwyllan, the bathing wells, in the neighbourhood of Bathgate, the road to the bath. For it was on occasion of his building this fortress that the "king of the Scots and all the people of the Scots, and the king of the "Strathclyde Gaels, and all the Strathclyde Gaels (the men of Galloway: "Westmin. 184) chose him for their father and lord." Chron. Sax. 110. In other words, they did him homage; hominum Malros, 146.

* Malms. de Reg. ii. 13. De Pont. ii. f. 140.

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stone, encamped in the neighbourhood for their protection *. That these fortifications were equal to their object is evident from the fact, that not one of them was ever captured by the enemy; and they were productive, in after ages, of consequences which this monarch could not possibly have foreseen. They were long the principal towns in England, and served to multiply a class of men of a higher order, and distinguished by greater privileges than the ceorles or husbandmen. To the burghers was intrusted the defence of their walls and of the adjacent country. By living in society, and having arms in their hands, they grew into consideration, and insensibly acquired such a degree of power and wealth as ultimately to open to their representatives the national council, and thus lay the foundation of that influence, which the people enjoy in our present constitution.

During his reign an important alteration was effected in the ecclesiastical economy of the kingdom of Wessex. The frequent wars which had preceded the restoration of Alfred, had caused a relaxation of discipline, and, in many places, had revived the superstitions of paganism. Pope Formosus sought by threats and exhortations to awaken the zeal of the West-Saxon prelates, and suggested the propriety of increasing the number of their bishoprics. About the year 910 the two churches of Winchester and Sherborne became vacant, and Plegmund, archbishop of Canterbury, improved the opportunity to make a new division of the kingdom, and to establish three more dioceses for the counties of Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall †.

The most important of the religious foundations at this period was the new minster at Winchester. At the death of Alfred, the aged Grimbald had requested permission to retire to the friends of his youth, the clergy of St. Omer: but Edward, unwilling to be deprived of his services, prevailed on him to remain in England,

* Chron. Sax. 106. 108. † Wilk. Con. i. 199, 200. Eadmer. Nov. v. 199.

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by promising to provide for him, according to the intention of the late king, a monastery in the neighbourhood of the royal city. From the bishop Denulf and the canons he purchased three acres of land, on which he erected a spacious church and buildings for the accommodation of Grimbald and a society of clergymen, and bestowed on them the lands which his father had destined for that purpose in his will. To this new minster he transferred the remains of Alfred: and in the same place his own body, and that of his son Ethelward, were deposited *.

ATHELSTAN,

THE FIRST MONARCH OF ENGLAND.

By the will of the late monarch the crown was left to Athelstan his eldest son, about thirty years of age. The claim of the new king was immediately admitted by the thanes of Mercia, and after a short time by those of Wessex. The ceremony of his coronation was performed at Kingston by Athelm, archbishop of Canterbury, and the successor of Plegmund †. A. D. 925.

Of the mother of Athelstan, Malmsbury has told a romantic tale, on the faith of an ancient ballad. She was the daughter of a neatherd, and called Egwina. Her superior beauty, even in her childhood, had attracted admiration: and a fortunate dream was said to portend that she would prove the mother of a powerful monarch.

* Monast. Ang. p. 208, 209. Annal. de Hyde apud Alf. iii. p. 201. 205 Chron. Sax. p. 111. During Edward's reign the English made frequent pilgrimages to Rome. In 921 many were massacred in passing the Alps by the Saracens from Fraxinetum. A few years later many others met with the same fate. Chron. Flodoardi apud Bouquet, vii. 177. 180.

† Chron. Sax. 111. Malm. 26. In Malmsbury we have three different accounts of Athelstan, which should be carefully distinguished. The first he compiled himself from documents within his reach. The second he abridged from the longer work of a contemporary poet, whose extravagant praises of his patron he reduced to the standard of probability and common sense. The last is a collection of facts for which no written authority could be found: but which were mentioned in Anglo-Saxon songs transmitted from one generation to another. Malm. 26—29.

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This report excited the curiosity of the lady who had nursed the children of Alfred. She took Egwina to her house, and educated her as one of her own family. When the etheling Edward casually visited his former nurse, he saw the daughter of the neatherd, and was captivated with her beauty. Athelstan was the fruit of their mutual affection *. From this very doubtful story it has been inferred that the king was an illegitimate son: but the force of the inference is weakened by the testimony of a contemporary poetess, who in mentioning the birth of Athelstan, alludes to the inferior descent of his mother, but at the same time calls her the partner of Edward's throne †. The child was the delight of his grandfather Alfred, who created him a knight by investing him with a mantle of purple, and a short sword in a golden scabbard. After the death of his mother he was intrusted to the care of his aunt Ethelfled, a fortunate circumstance, as it probably caused his interests to be, at this period, so eagerly espoused by the natives of Mercia.‡

In Wessex Athelstan had to guard against the secret designs of his enemies, of whom the most dangerous was the etheling Alfred. The associates of this prince had conspired to seize the person of the king at Winchester, and to deprive him of his sight. On the discovery of the plot Alfred demanded, according to the forms of the Saxon jurisprudence, to clear himself by oath; and Athelstan, who dared not refuse the privilege, sent him to Rome in the custody of his messengers, to perform the ceremony in the presence of the pontiff. The unfortunate etheling swore to his innocence on the altar of St. Peter. But as he survived his oath only three days, his death was considered a sufficient proof of his guilt by the witan, who adjudged his estates to the king. By him they were given to the monastery of Malmsbury §.

Sightric, the Danish king of Northumbria, had braved

* Malm. 29. † Quem peperit regi *consorti* non inclyta regni. *Rosvitha, de gestis Odon.* p. 165. The words consors regni show that Egwina was a crowned queen, and consequently the king's wife. Non inclyta is applied to her because she was not of the royal race, but Malmsbury and Florence state that she was of a very noble family. Malm. l. 197. ‡ Malm. 210. § Ibid., 230.

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the power of Edward: he solicited the friendship of Athelstan, and with it his sister Editha in marriage. The two princes met at Tamworth. Sightric was baptized, received the hand of Editha, and accepted from Athelstan a grant of what he already possessed, the country between the Tees and the Frith of Forth*. It is said, that the barbarian soon repented of his choice, and abandoned both his wife and religion†: it is certain that he died at the end of twelve months, and that Athelstan seized the opportunity to annex Northumbria to his own dominions. The two sons of Sightric fled before the superior power of the Anglo-Saxon; Godfrid into Scotland, and Anlaff into Ireland. Anlaff had the good fortune to meet with friends and associates: but Constantine, the king of the Scots, dared not afford an asylum to the enemy of Athelstan; and Godfrid, after a fruitless attempt to surprise the city of York, voluntarily surrendered himself to the mercy of the conqueror. He was received with humanity and treated with honour: but the mind of the Dane could not brook the idea of dependence, and on the fourth day he fled to the coast, and commenced the profession of a sea-king‡.

The ambition of Athelstan now grasped at the sovereignty of the whole island. In the north he levelled with the ground the castle of York, the principal bulwark of the Danish power: Ealdred the son of Ealdulf, a Saxon chieftain, was compelled to yield to him the strong castle of Bamborough; and the king of Scots, and the prince of Cumberland, obeyed his summons, and acknowledged his superiority. On the west he intimidated the Britons of Wales and Cornwall. The chieftains of the former waited on him at Hereford, where they stipulated to confine their countrymen to the right bank of the Wye, and to pay a yearly tribute of twenty pounds of gold, three hundred pounds of silver, and five thousand head of cattle. The Cornish Britons had hitherto reached A. D. 927.

* Malm. 27. Wallingford, 540. † Westmin. 185. ‡ Malm. 27

from the Land's-end to the river Ex, and possessed one half of Exeter. He commanded them to retire beyond the Tamar; surrounded the city with a strong wall of stone; and frequently honoured it with his presence. To confirm his claim of sovereignty, he convened at a place called Eadmote all the princes of the Scots, Cambrians and Britons, who, placing their hands between his, swore to him that fealty, which the Saxon vassal was accustomed to swear to his lord *.

During this tide of success, and when Athelstan had just reached the zenith of his power, Edwin, the eldest of his brothers, perished at sea. The traditionary ballads, consulted by Malmsbury, attribute his death to the jealousy of the king, who, convinced of his own illegitimacy, suspected Edwin of aspiring to that crown which belonged to him by the right of inheritance. It was in vain that the young prince asserted his innocence upon oath; and when his oath was disregarded, threw himself on the affection of his brother. The tyrant thought his own safety incompatible with the life of Edwin: and, while he affected the praise of lenity by commuting the sentence of death into that of banishment, committed his victim to the mercy of the waves in an open and shattered boat, with only one companion. The prince, in a paroxysm of despair, leaped into the sea: his attendant coolly waited for the flow of the tide, and was wafted back to the shore in the neighbourhood of Dover. Athelstan, it is added, when it was too late, repented of his cruelty, submitted to a course of canonical penance, and built the church of Middleton, that prayers might be daily offered for the soul of his murdered brother. Such is the tale which Malmsbury has preserved, but of which he does not presume to affirm or deny the truth †. It

* Malm. 27, 28. Flor. 602. Mail. 147. The contemporary writer in Malmsbury makes the tribute of the Welsh amount to 25,000 cattle. I have preferred the more moderate account of Caradoc, p. 48.

† Non constanter sed titubanter. Malm. 25. Non ut defendam, sed ne lectorum scientiam defraudem. Id. 29. The story is repeated by Sim. 134. 154. Hoved. 242. West. 196. Bromp. 836. It may however be ob-

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seems not to deserve credit. No trace of it is to be discovered in the contemporary biographer of Athelstan; and in the poem from which it was extracted, it was coupled with another tale evidently fabulous *. That Edwin perished at sea, cannot be doubted: but the king appears rather to have deplored his death as a calamity than to have regretted it as a crime. The account of Huntingdon contains all that can now be known of the transaction: "Soon afterwards he had the misfortune to "lose in the waves of the ocean his brother Edwin, a "youth of great vigour and good disposition †.

The king of Scots eagerly sought to free himself from his dependence on the English monarch: and with this view entered into alliance with Howel, king of Wales. But the power of Athelstan was irresistible. At the head of his army he extended his ravages as far as Dunfædor and Westmore, while his fleet pillaged the coast to the extremity of Caithness. Constantine was compelled to implore the clemency of the conqueror, and to surrender his son as an hostage for his fidelity ‡. A. D. 934.

Three years afterwards the superiority of the English king was threatened by a more formidable confederacy. In 937 a fleet of six hundred and fifteen sail cast anchor in the Humber. It obeyed the commands of Anlaff,

served, that Simeon, Hoveden, and Westminster, have all copied the same words from one common document. Florence (603), who usually copies the same, has in this instance deserted it, and omitted entirely the death of Edwin.

* The ballad proceeds to say that it was the butler of Athelstan who urged his master to the death of Edwin: that one day as he waited on the king, his foot slipped, and recovering himself with the other, he exclaimed: thus brother helps brother. The words reminding Athelstan of the fate of Edwin, he ordered the butler to be put to death. Malm. 29. This kind of story seems to have been a favourite with the Anglo-Saxons. The reader will meet with another edition of it in the history of Edward the Confessor.

† That Edwin perished at sea is asserted by the Saxon chronicle (111), and Mailros (147). The words of Huntingdon are: nec multo post adversa perculsus fortuna fratrem suum Edwinum magni vigoris juvenem et bonæ indolis maris fluctibus flebiliter amisit. Hunt. 204. 158, 159.

‡ Chron. Sax. 111. Sim. Dun. 134. Floren. 603. On this account Ethelwerd, a contemporary, says, Colla subdunt Scoti pariterque Picti, uno solidantur Britannidis arva. Ethelw. 482. Scotiam sibi subjugando perdomuit. Sim. Dun. 25.

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who was come with an army of Irish and northern adventurers to reconquer the dominions of his father. His arrival was the signal of war to his confederates, the Scots and Britons, who under their respective princes directed their march to the same spot. The lieutenants of Athelstan, unable to repel the torrent, endeavoured to retard its progress. Negotiations were opened to gain time for the arrival of Athelstan, who, not content with his own forces, had purchased the aid of several sea-kings. As he passed through Beverley, he visited the church, offered his dagger on the altar, and vowed to redeem it, if he returned victorious, at a price worthy of a king. The armies were soon in the neighbourhood of each other, when Anlaff planned a midnight attack, in the hope of surprising and killing his adversary. To discover the quarters of Athelstan, he is said to have adopted an artifice familiar to the Northmen. The minstrel was in that age a sacred character; and Anlaff with his harp in his hands fearlessly entered the English camp, mixed without suspicion among the troops, and was at last conducted to the royal pavilion. The king, who was at dinner, bade the stranger strike his harp, and rewarded him for his song. But the disguise of the pretended minstrel could not conceal him from the eye of a soldier, who had once served under his standard, but who disdained to betray his former leader. As soon as Anlaff was out of danger, this man related the circumstance to Athelstan, and to the charge of perfidy, indignantly replied: "No; I have shown that my honour is "above temptation; and remember that if I had been "perfidious to him, I might also have proved perfidious "to you." The king accepted the apology, and by his advice, removed to a distant part of the field. The ground which he had left, was afterwards occupied by the bishop of Sherborne. In the dead of the night the alarm was given: Anlaff with a body of chosen followers was in the midst of the camp, and a bloody and doubtful conflict ensued. In the morning, when he retired, it

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was discovered that the prelate had perished with all his attendants *.

Two days after this occurrence was fought the battle of Brunanburgh, in Northumbria: a battle celebrated in the relics of Saxon and Scandinavian poetry. The multitude of the confederates consisted of five nations, Norwegians, Danes, Irish, Scots, and Britons: in the English army waved a hundred banners, and round each banner, if we may believe the exaggeration of a contemporary, were ranged a thousand warriors. The contest lasted till sunset. A northern sea-king, in the pay of Athelstan, was opposed to the Irish, and after an obstinate struggle drove them into a wood at no great distance. Turketul with the citizens of London, and Singin with the men of Worcestershire, penetrated into the midst of the Scots, killed the son of their king, and compelled Constantine to save himself by a precipitate flight. Anlaff still maintained his position against all the efforts of Athelstan and his West-Saxons: but the victors returning from the pursuit, fell on his rear, and decided the fortune of the battle. The Northman escaped the sword of his enemies; but he left five confederate sea-kings, seven jarls, and many thousands of his followers, on the field of battle. "Never," says the native poet, "since the arrival of the Saxons and Angles, those "artists of war, was such a carnage known in England." The conqueror, in his return from the battle, redeemed his dagger from the church of Beverley with a grant of ample and valuable privileges †. A. D. 938.

This splendid victory crushed the enemies, and confirmed the ascendency of Athelstan. By the Northmen he was distinguished with the appellation of "the con-"queror ‡." The British princes no longer disputed his authority: the chieftains of the East-Anglian and North-

* Malm. 26. His authority for this story was probably nothing more than some ancient ballad.

† Chron. Sax. 112—114. Egilli Saga apud Johnstone, 31. Ingulf. 37. Mailros. 147. Malm. 27, 28.

‡ Snorre, p. 119. He also calls him Athelstan the faithful. Ibid.

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umbrian Danes, who under a nominal vassalage had so often maintained a real independence, entirely disappeared; and all the countries originally conquered and colonized by the different Saxon tribes became united under the same crown. To Athelstan belongs the glory of having established, what has ever since been called the kingdom of England. His predecessors, till the reign of Alfred, had been styled kings of Wessex. That monarch and his son Edward assumed the title of kings of the Anglo-Saxons. Athelstan sometimes called himself king of the English: at other times claimed the more pompous designation of king of all Britain.* Both these titles were indiscriminately employed by his immediate successors: but in the course of a century the latter fell into disuse: the former has been retained to the present age.†

As the power of the king became predominant in Britain, his influence began to be felt upon the continent. He maintained a friendly correspondence with several foreign courts; and three princes, destined to act important parts in the concerns of Europe, were educated under his protection. I. The first was Haco, the younger son of Harold Harfagre, the powerful king of Norway. When the father sent the child to the English court, he presented the king with a magnificent ship, of which the sails were of purple, while the beak was covered with plates of gold, and the inside hung round with gilded shields. At the death of Harold, Eric the elder brother ascended the throne; but he soon lost by his cruelty the affection of his subjects: and Athelstan

* For Alfred, see Heming. Chart. i. 42. Asser, 1, 3; for Edward, Gale, iii. p. 362; for Athelstan, id. p. 364. The coins in Camden, Tab. 4, 5, in Hick's Diss. tab. ii., and the MS. in the Cotton library, Tiberius, A. 2. Athelstan ab omnibus imperator totius Britanniæ est pronuntiatus. Flor. 693. Subactis ubique hostibus totius Britanniæ dominium obtinuit. Sim. Dun. 18. He calls himself Rex totius Britanniæ: Totius Britanniæ regni solio sublimatus. Basileus industrius Anglorum, cunctarumque gentium in circuitu persistentium. Cod. Dip. ii. 183, 194, 208.

† In the reign of Ethelred, the appellation of Anglo or English seems to have almost superseded that of Saxon. For Ethelwerd, of the royal race of Wessex, calls his own countrymen West Angles, and the South and East Saxons, South and East Angles. See Ethelwerd i. ii. and iii. passim.

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sent his "foster son," with a powerful fleet, to obtain possession of the sceptre. The enterprise succeeded: English missionaries under the protection of the new king disseminated the doctrines of the gospel; and the reign of Haco the good is still celebrated in the annals of Norway *. II. A second ward of the English king was Alan of Bretagne. The charitable donations of Ethelwulf, Alfred, and Edward, to the churches of Armorica, had given rise to an intercourse between the English and the transmarine Britons, who still, at the distance of four centuries, lamented their banishment from the land of their fathers †. When the Normans under Rollo depopulated Bretagne, numbers of the natives sought and obtained an asylum under the protection of Athelstan. Among the fugitives was Matheudoi, who had married the daughter of Alan the great: and who committed his infant son to the care of his friend. Athelstan stood sponsor to the young prince at his baptism; watched over his education; and at a proper age sent him back to his native country with the surviving exiles, and a band of English adventurers. The young Alan proved himself worthy of his protector: he recovered by degrees the territories of his grandfather; and by a long series of splendid actions made himself the sovereign of Bretagne ‡ III. Athelstan's own nephew was the third of his royal pupils. His sister Edgiva had been married to Charles the simple, king of France, to whom she bore a son Louis, who from his long exile in England, was surnamed D'outremer. Three years afterwards, her husband was imprisoned by the treachery of Herbert, count of Vermandois: but the queen escaped with her child, and was received with an affectionate welcome by her father Edward. When Athelstan succeeded to the throne, he was not indifferent to the A. D. 923.

* Malms. 28. Snorre, 121, 138, 160. Havniæ, 1777. Mr. Turner has the merit of calling the attention of writers to the connection between Athelstan and the king of Norway. Vol. ii. 83—91. It is disputed by Leppenburg (ii. 105.)

† In exulatu atque in captivitate in Francia commoramur. Epist. Radbodi Dol. epis. Gale, iii. 364.

‡ Chron. Nannet. apud Bouquet, vii. 276. Gul. Gemet. iii. 1.

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interests of his sister and nephew. In 926 the friends of Charles made an attempt to obtain his freedom, and Louis was sent at their request to France: but the efforts of the royalists were speedily repressed, and the young prince sought again the protection of his uncle. After an exile of thirteen years he recovered the throne of his fathers. Athelstan had contracted a friendship with the duke of Normandy, who was induced, at the death of Rodulf the successor of Charles, to espouse the interests of Louis *. An embassy from France, at the head of which was the archbishop of Sens, demanded the rightful descendant of Charlemagne: they swore in the hands of Athelstan and Edgiva, that he should be immediately put in possession of the royal authority; and Louis sailed to Boulogne with a splendid retinue of Anglo-Saxon thanes and prelates. He was received by a deputation of the French nobility, conducted in state to Laon, and crowned with the usual solemnity †. But he soon found himself opposed by the factions which had dethroned his father, and were now supported by Otho of Germany; and therefore solicited the assistance of his uncle, whose fleet ravaged with impunity the lands of his enemies along the coast of Flanders ‡. As for Edgiva, she continued to hold a distinguished place in the councils and court of her son; till in an unlucky hour she fixed her affections on the count of Meaux, the son of the man who had wrested the sceptre from her husband. At her instigation he carried her off, as it were, by force, and married her as soon as they arrived
A. D. in a place of apparent safety. Louis was indignant at
951. the conduct of his mother. He immediately pursued the fugitives, made Edgiva his prisoner, and committed her to the custody of his queen Herberge §.

Besides Edgiva and the wife of Sightric the Northumbrian, Athelstan had seven other sisters, of whom three

* Hugo Floriac. apud Bouquet, vii. 319. Item. 304. Chron. Turon. ix.
† Flodoardi Hist. iv. 26. Chron. Viridun. apud Bouquet, vii. 290. Chron. Osoran. viii. 237.
‡ Chron. Flodoard. vii. 193
§ Daniel, Hist. de France, ann 951. Chron. Flodoardi, viii. 207. Edgiva's epitaph may be seen in Mabillon, Analec. i. 427.

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put on the veil, four were married to some of the most powerful princes in Europe. 1. In 926, Hugo the great, father to the founder of the Capetian dynasty, solicited the hand of Ethilda. He had been among the most active enemies of Charles the simple: but had recently declared in favour of the captive monarch; and had selected for his ambassador Adulf of Flanders, the cousin of Athelstan. In the assembly of the witan at Abingdon were displayed the numerous and costly presents which he had sent, perfumes, jewels, relics, horses, the sword of Constantine the great, and the spear of Charlemagne. Before this splendid exhibition his former demerits disappeared; and Ethilda became the wife of a noble Frank, who without the title, possessed the wealth and power of a king.

2. Soon after the battle of Brunanburgh, the emperor, Henry the Fowler, sought a consort for his son Otho among the sisters of Athelstan. The king appears to have been flattered by the request: and to return the compliment, he sent both Editha and Ediva to Germany, that the imperial suitor might make his choice. Before their departure each princess received presents from the king, the thanes, and the prelates, the only dower she could offer to her future husband. They were conducted as far as Cologne by the chancellor Turketul. Otho preferred Editha: her sister was married to a prince whose name has not been preserved, but whose dominions lay among the Alps. 3. There only remained Elgiva, the youngest and most beautiful of the daughters of Edward. She accepted the hand of Louis, prince of Aquitain *.

In the year 941 Athelstan died, regretted by his subjects, and admired by the surrounding nations. He was of a slender habit, and middling stature. His hair, which was yellow, he wore in ringlets entwined with thread of gold. Among the higher orders of the nobi-

* For these marriages see Ethelwerd (473), Ingulf. (37, 38), Malmsbury (25, 28), Westminster (185, 186), and Hrosvitha, de gestis Odonis, 161—165. There is much confusion with respect to the names of the princesses, and their foreign husbands. Bouquet (ix. 21. not. e.) makes the prince near the

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lity he maintained that reserve which became his superior station: to the lower classes of his subjects he was affable and condescending. From his father he had inherited a considerable treasure: but his liberality was not inferior to his opulence, and the principal use which he made of money was to enrich others. To his vassals he was accustomed to make valuable presents: the spoil collected in his military expeditions was always divided among his followers: and his munificence to the clergy was proved by the churches which he erected or repaired *. Neither ought his charities to be left unnoticed. He annually redeemed at his private expense a certain number of convicts, who had forfeited their liberty for their crimes: and his bailiffs were ordered, under severe penalties, to support a pauper of English extraction on every two of his farms †. As a legislator he was anxious to suppress offences, to secure an impartial administration of justice, and to preserve the standard coin of the realm in a state of purity. With this view he held assemblies of the witan at Greatly, Faversham, Exeter, and Thundersfield: associations were formed under his auspices for the protection of property: and regulations were enacted respecting the apprehension, the trial, and the punishment of malefactors. Negligence in the execution of the laws was severely chastised. A thane paid to the crown a fine of sixty shillings: a superior magistrate was amerced in double that sum, with the forfeiture of his office ‡. In his will he had chosen the abbey of Malmsbury for the place of his sepulture. There he had deposited the remains of his cousins Ælfwin and Ethelwin, who fell at Brunanburgh; and to the same place his body was conveyed in solemn pomp, followed by a long train of prelates and nobles, and sur-

Alps, but without quoting his authority, Eblus, the son of Rainulf, Count of Poitou. Some have thought that Louis of Arles died too early to have been married to Elgiva, but L'Art de verefier les Dates states that he could not have died before 928, probably later.

* All these particulars are mentioned by his contemporary biographer, apud Malms. 27. † Each pauper received annually a complete suit of clothes, and monthly a measure of meal, a gammon of bacon, or a ram worth four pennies. Leg. Sax. 56. ‡ Leg. 54—69.

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rounded by the presents which he had bequeathed to the monastery *.

EDMUND.

The civil wars, which formerly desolated Northumbria, have been mentioned already: after the extinction of its native kings it continued to present similar scenes of anarchy and bloodshed. Its chieftains were partly of Saxon, partly of Danish origin, alike in disposition and habits; but enemies to each other, and equally regardless of treachery or of violence, when it could contribute to their aggrandizement. Every sea-king was certain of finding an asylum among them; and, if he had the ambition to aspire to a throne, there were never wanting men willing to draw the sword in his cause. Sometimes a fortunate adventurer extended his authority over the whole nation; sometimes two or more shared the sovereign power among them. But they were no better than flitting shadows of royalty, following each other in rapid succession. After a year or two many of them perished by the treachery of their friends or the swords of their enemies; many were compelled to abandon the country, and revert to the pursuits of piracy; hardly one transmitted the inheritance of his authority to his children. Occasionally necessity extorted from them an acknowledgment of the superiority claimed by the kings of Wessex: but the moment the danger was removed, they uniformly forgot their oaths, and resumed the exercise of their independence. It seems to have mattered little, whether these princes were natives or foreigners: the pride of the inhabitants was satisfied, provided they did not crouch to the pretensions of the southern Saxons, whose superior civilization was viewed with contempt by the barbarism of the Northumbrians.

After the battle of Brunanburgh the terror of Athelstan had kept this turbulent people under some re-

* Malm. 29.

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straint: but at his death their ancient spirit revived; Anlaff was invited to hazard a third time the fortune of war; and within a few weeks the Humber was covered by a numerous fleet of foreign adventurers. The sea-king rested his hope of success on the rapidity of his motions, and, marching into Mercia, obtained possession of Tamworth. Edmund, the brother of Athelstan, and about eighteen years of age, had been crowned at Kingston, and hastened to oppose the invaders. The operations of the campaign are involved in much obscurity. The success which attended the first efforts of Edmund, seems to have been balanced by a subsequent defeat: and the respective losses of the two princes induced them to listen to the suggestions of the archbishops Odo and Wolstan, who laboured to effect a pacification. The vanity of our chroniclers has exhibited the transaction in partial colours: but the conditions of the treaty prove the superiority of Anlaff. Edmund ceded in full sovereignty to the Dane all the provinces on the north of the Watling-street *.

A. D. 941.

The sea-king did not long enjoy his good fortune. He died the next year, and Edmund improved the opportunity to recover the dominions which he had lost. His measures were planned with foresight, and executed with vigour. The five-burghs, as they were called, of Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, Stamford, and Lincoln, had long been inhabited by the descendants of Danes, who, though they made a profession of obedience to the English monarchs, considered it a duty to favour the enterprises of their kinsmen. These towns formed as it were a chain of fortresses running through Mercia, and garrisoned by enemies. The king began his operations by reducing them in succession. Their inhabitants were expelled, and replaced by English colonies †. Edmund

* Besides the printed chroniclers, see another in MS. quoted by Mr. Turner, Tib. B. 4. Westminster (187) adds to the condition of the treaty, that the survivor was to succeed to the dominions of the other. This is not mentioned by any other writer.

† Chron. Sax. 114. Hunt. 203. Flor. 603.

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next proceeded into Northumbria. That country was already divided between two princes, one of whom, like his predecessor, was called Anlaff, the other styled himself Reginald, king of York. They submitted without resistance to the superior power of Edmund, acknowledged themselves his vassals, and embraced Christianity. The king stood sponsor to Anlaff, at his baptism; and adopted Reginald for his son, when he received confirmation. Yet he had hardly left the country, when they again asserted their independence. Their perfidy soon met with its punishment. The archbishop of York and the ealdorman of Mercia united their forces, and drove the two rebels out of the country*. A. D. 943.

A sense of their own danger had hitherto taught the Britons of Cumbria to assist their neighbours in these struggles to maintain their independence. It was against them that Edmund next directed his arms. Every effort which they could make, was hopeless: the two sons of Dunmail their king fell into the hands of the conqueror, and were deprived of sight, and the country was bestowed on Malcolm, king of Scots, on the condition that he should become the vassal of the English crown, and should unite with Edmund in opposing the attempts of the sea-kings†. A. D. 945.

The reign of Edmund lasted only six years. He was celebrating at Pucklekirk in Gloucestershire the feast of St. Augustine, the apostle of the Saxons, when he perceived Leof a noted outlaw enter the hall. This man had been banished on account of his crimes some years before; and now had the audacity to seat himself at the royal table, and to offer resistance, when the cup-

* Ethe.. 482. Flor. 604. Hunt. 903

† Ut sibi terra et mari fidelis esset. Lel. Col, ii, 399. Sim. 150. Hunt. 203. Flor. 604. His midwyrhta, or associate in war, Chron. Sax. 115. Ut Aquilonares Angliæ partes terra marique ab hostium adventantium incursione tueretur. West. 188. Fordun (iv. 24) asserts that according to the agreement between the two kings, the heir to the crown of Scotland was always to hold Cumberland of the crown of England. The spot where Dunmail was defeated is still marked with a heap of stones about nine miles from Keswick, on the road to Ambleside. West. 82.

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bearer ordered him to depart. Passion hurried Edmund to the spot, where he received a wound in the breast, from a dagger which Leof had concealed under his clothes. The king immediately expired: the assassin was cut in pieces by the royal attendants*.

Edmund had been married to Ælfgive, a princess of exemplary virtue, whose solicitude for the relief of the indigent, and charity in purchasing the liberty of slaves, have been highly extolled by our ancient writers.† She bore him two sons, Edwy and Edgar, of whom the eldest could not be more than nine years of age. Their childhood rendered them incapable of directing the government; and in an assembly of the prelates, thanes, and vassal princes of Wales, their uncle Edred, the only surviving son of Edward, was chosen king; and, to use the inflated language of a charter given on the occasion, was "consecrated at Kingston to the quadripartite government of the Anglo-Saxons, Northumbrians, "Pagans and Britons"‡.

EDRED.

A.D. 946. The reign of Edred was principally distinguished by the final subjugation of Northumbria. Immediately after his coronation, he proceeded to that country: and received first from the natives, afterwards from the Scots, and lastly from the Cumbrians, the usual oaths of fidelity§. But the obedience of the Nōrthumbrians lasted only as long as they were overawed by his presence: he was no sooner departed, than they expelled his officers, and set his authority at defiance. Eric, who had been driven from Norway by his brother Haco, and had wandered for years a pirate on the ocean, landed

* It has been disputed whether he was assassinated in 946 or 948. But there is a charter of Edred, given at the coronation of that prince in 946, and several others by the same, dated in 947. See Cod. Dipl. ii. 268, 270, 272.

† Ælgive has been said to have been only the king's mistress, because in a charter she calls herself concubina regis. But concubina in the Latin of that age had the same meaning as canlaterana and consors. Most certainly the king's mistress would not be called upon to sign his charters. By the chroniclers she is styled "the holy queen," and Ethelwerd, who could not be ignorant, terms her Edmund's wife and queen. In Eodem anno obiit regina Elfgyun Eadmundi regis conjux (lib. iv. c. vi.) She died before the king.

‡ Smith's Bed. App. 772.

§ Flor. 604. West. 189. "The Scots gave him their oaths that they would "will whatever he should will." Chron. Sax. 115. Cui Northymbri subjiciuntur cuncti, necnon Scoti jusjuranda confirmant, immutabilemque fidem. Ethelw. 482.

his officers, and set his authority at defiance. Eric, who had been driven from Norway by his brother Haco, and had wandered for years a pirate on the ocean, landed on their coast, and was immediately saluted king. The news excited the indignation of Edred. His first object was to secure the important city of York; and with that view he despatched his chancellor Turketul to Archbishop Wolstan, to confirm the wavering fidelity of that prelate, and the citizens. The king soon afterwards entered Northumbria at the head of the men of Wessex and Mercia; and by ravaging the lands severely punished the perfidy of the rebels. But as he led back his followers, loaden with pillage and unsuspicious of danger, the gates of York were thrown open in the night; a chosen band of adventurers silently followed his march; and a division of his army was surprised and destroyed. To revenge this insult he resumed the work of devastation: but his anger was appeased by presents, entreaties, and submission; and he returned in triumph with a long train of captives to London. Eric might still perhaps have maintained himself in the country, had he not been opposed by a new competitor, Anlaff, one of the princes who had fled from the sword of Edmund in the last reign. The two rivals assembled their forces: Anlaff was victorious; and the Norwegian with his son and brother perished in the wilds of Stanemoor by the treachery of Osulf, and the sword of Macco, the son of Anlaff*.

This was the last struggle of Northumbrian independence. Edred returned with a numerous army, and traversed the country without opposition. Large and fertile districts were laid desolate: the archbishop, whose conduct had greatly irritated the king, was immured for a year within the castle of Whithambury; † the principal A. D. 952.

* Ing. 30, 41. West. 189. Mall. 148.

† What was Wulfstan's offence? According to Ingulf, he was suspected of having favored the rebellion of the Northumbrians in the second year of Edred's reign, though he had been recalled to his duty by the advice of Turk-

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noblemen were torn from their dependents, and carried by the king into captivity; the whole province, like the rest of England, was divided into shires, ridings, and wapentakes; and the government was intrusted to a number of officers appointed by Edred, under the superintendence of Osulf, who took the title of earl of Northumberland *.

Edred was afflicted with a lingering and painful disease†: and much of the merit of his reign must be attributed to the counsels of his favourite ministers, his chancellor Turketul, and Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury. Turketul was a clergyman of royal descent, the eldest son of Ethelwerd, and the grandson of Alfred. He had refused preferment in the church, but accepted and retained the office of chancellor or secretary to the king, under his cousins Athelstan, Edmund, and Edred. His virtues and abilities were honoured with the approbation of the prince, and the applause of the people. He held the first place in the royal councils: the most important offices, both civil and ecclesiastical, were conferred by his advice; and his attendance on the sovereign was required in every military expedition. The important part which he acted in the battle of Brunanburgh, has been already noticed ‡. When he was sent by Edred to archbishop Wolstan, it chanced that his road led him

etul. (Ing. f. 496.) It is difficult to understand the narrative of Malmsbury, who in one place (De Pont, iii. f. 153, b.) evidently confounds Edmund with Edred; and in another (De Reg. i. 232), says that he was charged with favoring his countrymen in transfugio. Wendover states that several charges were brought against him, principally that he had punished with death several burghers of Thetford, for the murder of the Abbot Aldhelm. Wend. Ann. 951. He was restored to liberty, and to the exercise of his office, in a council held *at* Dorchester. Wulstano a custodia soluto episcopalis honor apud Doracester restitutur. Hov. Ann. 953. Hence it has been said that he was made bishop of Dorchester; but this cannot be, for he afterwards signed charters as before, with the title and precedence of Archbishop of York, in the Codex Diplomaticus, ii., 304, 5, 6, 317.

* Ing. 41. Sim. 156. Walling. 541.

† Malm. 30. He was for a long time unable to take any solid food (Vit S. Dun. in Act. SS. p. 353): a most unlucky circumstance for an Anglo-Saxon king, of whom it was expected that he should be the foremost in the pleasures of the table as well as the dangers of the field.

‡ Ingulf remarks (p. 37) that though he led the troops to battle, he refused to make use of arms, because the canons prohibited to clergymen the effusion of blood. It was, however, the doctrine of the age, that an exception was allowed in war undertaken for the protection of the country against a pagan invasion. Ibid.

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by the ruins of Croyland, which still afforded a miserable shelter to three monks, the survivors of the Danish devastations. Turketul was affected by the piety and resignation of these aged anchorites; and felt a secret desire to enter into their society, and to restore their monastery to its ancient splendor. At his return he solicited, and after several refusals, obtained, the permission of his sovereign. The public crier announced to the citizens of London that the chancellor, before he quitted his office, was anxious to discharge all his debts, and to make threefold reparation to any person, whom he might have injured. When he had satisfied every demand, he gave fifty-four of his manors, the inheritance which he had received from his father, to the king, and reserved six for the use of his monastery. At Croyland he made his monastic profession, received the investiture from Edred, was blessed by the bishop of Dorchester, and the next day by the advice of the lawyers resigned the abbey with its appurtenances into the hands of the sovereign. All the lands which formerly belonged to it, had, during the Danish wars, been seized by Burhred, king of Mercia, who annexed a part to the crown, and divided the remainder among his thanes. The former were cheerfully restored by the piety of Edred: of the latter several manors were purchased from the present possessors by Turketul. At the next meeting of the witan he received a new grant of the whole from the king in the most ample form, but with the exception of the privilege of sanctuary, which he refused, as a violation of justice and an incentive to crime. From this period he spent seven-and-twenty years in the discharge of his duties as abbot. The zeal of the preceptor was rewarded by the proficiency of his disciples; and at his death in 975 the monks of Croyland formed a numerous and edifying community *.

* See Ingulf, 25. 30—41. 52. That the original work of Ingulf has been interpolated by his transcribers, must be admitted. This of course detracts from its authority. But much of what it narrates respecting the royal descent, the riches, and the donations of Turketul, is confirmed by Orderic, p. 340.

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The abbot of Glastonbury, the other favorite of Edred, occupies a disproportionate space in most of our modern histories. Nearly related to Athelm, archbishop of Canterbury, and to Elphege, bishop of Winchester, he had been introduced by them a candidate for royal favor to the court of king Athelstan. But the jealousy of rivals, and the reflections suggested by a dangerous illness, diverted the thoughts of the young thane from worldly pursuits to the monastic state; and having received the order of priesthood, he served during several years the church of Glastonbury. In this situation his zeal, disinterestedness, and charities attracted the notice of the public. by Turketul he was recommended to the favour of Edmund; and that prince bestowed on him Glastonbury with its possessions. By Edred, Dunstan was not less respected than he had been by his predecessor. The new king made him the director of his conscience; deposited with him his treasures and the titles to his lands; and earnestly solicited him to accept the vacant bishopric of Winchester. This preferment he declined; and, while he was more obscurely employed in the government of his monastery, unexpectedly lost his friend and benefactor. The king, whose constitution had been enfeebled
A. D. by frequent returns of his disease, expired in the tenth
955 year of his reign, and was buried at Winchester* November 23.

* Ang. Sac. ii. 90—104. Malm. 30. MS. Cleop. 13, B. xiii. f. 60.

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CHAPTER V.

ANGLO-SAXONS.

Reigns of Edwy—Edgar—Edward the Martyr—Ethelred—and Edmund, surnamed Ironside.

EDWY.

At the accession of Edred, his nephews Edwy and Edgar had been passed by on account of their childhood: at his death the elder of the two brothers was chosen king by the unanimous voice of the witan, and entered immediately on the full exercise of the royal authority.* A. D 855

We are assured, by the most ancient writers, that the character of the young monarch — he could not be more than sixteen or seventeen years of age — was already marked by the violence of his passions. Until he received the royal unction, he appeared indeed to listen with some deference to the admonitions of archbishop

* It is observable that the ancient writers almost always speak of our kings as *elected*. Edwy's grandmother in her charter (Lye, App. iv.) says: "he was chosen *gecoren*." The contemporary biographer of Dunstan (apud Boll. tom. iv. Mail, 344) says: ab universis Anglorum principibus communi electione. He also intimates that Wessex and Mercia had not yet coalesced into one kingdom: ut in *utraque plebe* regum numeros nominaque suppleret *electus*, p. 353.

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Odo; but from the moment of his coronation, he conceived himself above control; and on the very day of that ceremony, when he was seated at table after dinner with the nobility and clergy, abruptly left the company to keep an appointment with a favorite female, of the name of Ethelgive, who, with her daughter, awaited his coming in a neighboring apartment.* If we may listen to the scandal of the age, chastity was not her distinguishing virtue, nor did her visit to the royal youth originate in the most delicate motives.† A general murmur spoke the indignation of the company. At their request the abbot of Glastonbury, with the prelate Kynsey, entered the chamber, and the unwilling prince was persuaded or compelled to resume his seat. By the language of modern prejudice, the share which Dunstan bore in this transaction has been described as an attempt to subdue the spirit of the king, and a daring insult to the royal authority; but let the reader advert to the manners of the age, and he will not be surprised, if the writer resented the abrupt departure of the king, or their messengers treated with little ceremony the women who had drawn him away.

The affront, however, sunk deep into the mind of Edwy; and Dunstan, aware how grievously he had offended, withdrew after a while from the court, to bury himself in the

* Ang. Sac. ii. 83. The name of the mother was Æthelgiva (sic erat nomen ignominiosæ mulieris. MS. Cleop. p. 76.)

† Huic quædam natione præcelsa, inepta tamen mulier per nefandum familiaritatis lenocinium sectando inhærebat, eotenus videlicet quo sese vel etiam natam suam *sub conjugali titulo illi innectendo sociaret.* Repente prosiluit lascivus ad prædictum scelus lenocinii — invenerent illum intra utrasque volutantem. MS. Cleop. p. 76. This writer was a contemporary; and it is evident from the words in italics that Edwy was not then married. Nor does the contrary appear from the Abingdon Charters. Supposing the subscriptions to them genuine, it will only follow that the king was married when he signed the charters, not that he was married on the day of his coronation.

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obscurity of his cloister.* But Ethelgive was still at hand to keep alive the displeasure of her lover: a remonstrance addressed to the king by archbishop Odo, was attributed to the suggestion of Dunstan, and a resolution was taken at once to close the mouth of this importunate monitor. At first his monks were urged to rebel against him. The attempt failed. A party of thanes next entered his domain in hostile array, drove off the cattle and plundered the abbey. Dunstan escaped; but it was in vain that he sought an asylum among his friends; his footsteps were traced from place to place, and so keen was the pursuit, that the ship which bore him from England was still in sight, when his enemies appeared on the beach, with orders, it was said, to deprive him of his eyes.† He reached in safety the coast of Flanders, was received with hospitality by the earl Arnulf, and retired to the monastery of St. Peter's in Ghent. His two abbeys of Glastonbury and Abingdon were dissolved by Edwy, and the few monks, whom he had collected and formed with the view of resuscitating the order, were dispersed among their friends and relatives.

It is unfortunate that we know not the chronological order of the events which happened during the reign of Edwy. If we may believe a very ancient writer, the king in his second, perhaps his third year, was prevailed upon to marry; but at the same time he kept a mistress whom he had carried off by force, and whom he had placed for security in one of the royal villas. The scandal became public, and the archbishop, being informed of the fact,

* This was probably some months after the coronation, for in 956 he signs an undoubted charter of Edwy, with the title of dogmatista (Cod. Dipl. ii. 326); but this is the last time. His name is not to be found to any of the following charters of Edwy, though they are numerous.

† Ut ferunt, oculos illius, si in his maris littoribus inveniretur, eruendo dempsissent. MS. Cleop. 77. Si comprehendi valeret, sine ullo respectu misericordiæ oculos ei erui præcepit. Eadmer, apud Sur. 237. Parentela mulieris prosequens Sancti oculos eruere disponebat. Wallingford, 543.

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proceeded suddenly to the villa, took possession of the female, and sent her under an escort out of the kingdom. To Edwy he undertook to justify this bold proceeding, and with mild and parental language exhorted the young king to reform his conduct.* But adversity proved a more efficacious monitor than the archbishop. Edwy had abandoned himself to the counsels of men, who, to secure his favor, pandered to his passions. All persons of his kindred were removed from court; of many thanes the lands were plundered by his direction; of others, the inheritances were seized; every order of men suffered from illegal exactions, and his grandmother, Eadgive, a princess revered for her age, rank and character, by the whole nation, was deprived by him of all her property.† At length the Mercians rose in arms against him, and Edwy fled for his life.‡ According to some Anglo-Norman writers, Ethelgive — whether they mean the female mentioned in the history of his coronation, or some other of the same name — accompanied him in his flight, but

* Rex sub uxore propria alteram adamavit quam et rapuit. . . . Antistes autem Phineatico zelo stimulatus et ira Dei irritatus, repente cum sociis equum adscendit, et ad villam qua mulier mansitabat pervenit, eamque rapuit, et de regno perduxit, regemque dulcibus admonuit verbis periterque factis, ut ab impiis actibus custodiret se, &c. MS. Nero, E. 1, 8.

† Unde quid mali succreverit, quam infamis fama populorum aures et ora repleverit, *facile est et me tacente videre.* Ipse namque possessiones plurimorum diripere, hos et illos exhæreditare, majores natu proscribere, totumque regnum innumeris oppressionibus conturbare festinavit. Apud Eadmer in vit. S. Dunstani 236. Col. Agrip. 1618. Accessit his malis ejus nimis detestabile malum. Matrem quippe totius Angliæ nobilitatricem, ecclesiarum consolatricem, et sustentatricem oppressorum ——— in immensum afflixit, ac vastatis rebus ad ipsam pertinentibus, ab eo statu, in quo esse solebat, servus et crudelis dejecit. Ead. Ibid. Atavam suam prædari præcepit. MS. Cleop. 78. Eadgive states the same in her charter, published by Lye. Lye, app. IV.

‡ Factum est ut in prætereuntibus annis penitus a brumali populo relinqueretur contemptus, quum in commisso regimine insipienter egisset, sagaces et sapientes odio vanitatis disperdens, et ignaros quosque sibi similes studio dilectionis adsciscens. MS. Cleop. 78.

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was surprised by his pursuers, and cruelly put to death.* The king had the good fortune to cross the Thames, and to save himself in Wessex. The Mercians chose his brother Edgar for their king; and the men of Kent and Wessex, unwilling to prolong a civil and disastrous war for his sake, assented to a general meeting of thanes from both nations, in which it was determined that the Thames should form the boundary between the separate dominions of the two brothers. Edwy governed his portion in peace, and to the satisfaction of his subjects, but died prematurely in 959 or 960.† A. D. 959 960.

To account for the revolution which transferred the sceptre of Mercia from the hands of Edwy to those of Edgar, modern writers have set aside the authority of the original historians, and supplied its place with conjectures of their own. By one we are told that Dunstan, panting for revenge, hastened from Flanders, and intrigued with the northern thanes; by another, that the monks of Mercia, fearing the same fate which had befallen their brethren in Wessex, preached up the duty of revolt; by a third, that the insurrection was owing to the political influence of archbishop Odo. But not one of their fictions can bear the test of inquiry. It is certain that Dunstan did not leave the place of his banishment till after the partition of the kingdom between the two brothers; that there existed no Benedictine monastery in Mercia, on which Edward could wreak his vengeance; and that Odo, with the men of Kent, among whom his influence chiefly lay, continued the faithful subject of that prince, constantly attending his court, and subscribing to his charters, till 959. If Edwy forfeited the crown of Mercia, it was owing to his own lawless and oppressive conduct, which was not confined to a

* Ang. Sac. ii. 106.

† Sicque universo populo testante publica res regum ex definitione sagacium segregata est, ut famosum flumen Tamense regnum disterminaret amborum. MS. Cleop. 78.

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few monks, but extended to his grandmother, his kindred, the friends of his late uncle, and the principal thanes of his kingdom.*

EDGAR.

Edgar was still in the cradle, when he lost his mother Elfgiva. By his father the infant was intrusted to the care of Alfwena, the wife of Athelstan, an East-Anglian ealdorman, who from his royal descent and extensive authority had obtained the surname of the "half-king." The young prince was educated with their children; and was, it is probable, indebted to the family for his elevation to the throne of Mercia, in opposition to his brother Edwy. Athelstan, a little before his death, entered the monastery of Glastonbury; his four sons, Ethelwold, Alfwold, Athelsin, and Ailwin, long continued to be the favourite counsellors of Edgar.

One of the first measures of the new king, or rather of his ministers (for he was only in his fourteenth year) was to recall from exile the abbot of Glastonbury. His possessions, which lay in the dominions of Edwy, he could not recover: but he was retained in an honourable situation at court near the person of Edgar. When the witan assembled, he opened the session with a discourse, which excited the admiration of his hearers; received at their unanimous request the episcopal consecration; and on the death of the bishop of Worcester, was appointed successor to that prelate. The next year the church of London became vacant; and he accepted, though with reluctance, the administration of that diocese.

* The life of Edwy, as it appears here, has been wholly rewritten by Dr. Lingard for the last edition of his work. The former editions dwelt on cruelties of Edwy, which here are in general terms referred to the courtiers who surrounded them. The author also dwelt in detail on the cruelties inflicted on Dunstan. Nor were the speculations in the closing paragraph printed in the previous editions. There are no new authorities which have been brought to light on the subject, and it is only in connection with certain theological controversies relative to Dunstan, and the influence of the ecclesiastical power in the state, that there has been any discussion regarding the reign.— AM. ED.

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The thanes of Wessex, after the death of Edwy, offered the throne to Edgar; and the two kingdoms were again united under the same monarch. The oppressive acts of the late government were now solemnly annulled. Edgive, the relict of Edward, recovered her patrimony: Dunstan was re-established in the possession of Glastonbury and Abingdon; and ample reparation was made to the thanes, who had suffered from the passion or resentment of Edwy *. One of the last acts of that prince had been to nominate Byrhtelm, bishop of Sherborne, to the metropolitical see of Canterbury. Perhaps the ministers of Edgar were unwilling to see a favourite of his brother at the head of the English church: certain it is that in the assembly of the witan his want of vigour was alleged as a proof of incapacity; and that Byrhtelm returned with disgrace to the church, from which he had been promoted. Dunstan, who was selected in his place, repaired to Rome, and obtained the pallium from John XII. He resigned the bishopric of London in favour of Ælfstan, that of Worcester in favour of Oswald, the nephew of Odo †.

Edgar has received from posterity the surname of "the peaceful." During the sixteen years of his reign he was never compelled to unsheath the sword against either a foreign or a domestic enemy. The circumstance is the more remarkable, if we consider the lot of the kings who preceded, or followed him. His predecessors, during the long lapse of one hundred and fifty years, scarcely enjoyed an interval of repose from the repeated, and often formidable, invasions of the Northmen. Of his successors his son was driven by them into Normandy: his grandson was compelled to share the throne with a foreign chieftain; and his descendants in the third degree lived in exile, while the English sceptre

* MS. Cleop. 79.

† MS. Cleop. 79. Osb. 109. Wharton (Ang. Sac. ii. 197. not.) infers from the words of Osbern (p. 110), that Dunstan possessed Rochester with Canterbury. This is a mistake. Osbern says the contrary. So also does Eadmer, 214.

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was wielded by a race of Danish sovereigns. This long interval of tranquillity, the peculiar felicity of Edgar, arose partly from the policy of his uncle Edred, partly from his own good fortune and the vigour of his councils.

The population of Northumbria was composed in a great proportion of Danes, or the posterity of Danes. Animosity against their southern neighbours, and affection for their own kinsmen, induced them frequently to invite, always to assist, the invaders. By Edred, indeed, they had been completely subdued: but it is probable that their submission would only have been temporary, had not circumstances connected their interests with the prosperity of the new king. Edgar had been educated among the Danes of East-Anglia: the Northumbrians had united with that people and the Mercians to raise him to the throne; and they respected him as a king whom they had not only chosen for themselves, but had imposed on the hostile kingdom of Wessex. He, whether it were through gratitude or policy, paid to them on all occasions the most marked attention; and the only blot which the southern annalists could discover in his character, was his partiality for the manners, and his zeal for the welfare, of his Danish subjects *. Still he appears to have kept a watchful eye over their conduct; and on the death of Osulf, their first earl, his jealousy taught him to diminish the power of the Northumbrians by dividing the country into two earldoms; of which he gave one, extending from the Humber as far as the Tees, to Oslac, and the other, comprising the lands on the north of that river, to Eadulf†. Soon after this division the witan assembled at York, and Edgar addressed them in language, which, while it suited his own dignity, was soothing to the vanity of a high-spirited people: "It is "my will," said the king, "that with respect to worldly

* Chron. Sax. 115. In hoc tamen peccabat, quod paganos eos, qui in hac patria sub eo degebant, nimis firmavit, et extraneos huc adductos plus æquo diligens valde corroboravit. Hunt. 204.

† Walling. 544. Hoved. 243. This writer makes the Tyne the division between the counties.

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"rights, the Danes choose for themselves such laws, as "are best; and that the English observe the statutes "which I and my counsellors have added to the ancient "dooms. But one thing I would have to be common to "all my people, English, Danes, and Britons, in every "part of my empire: that both rich and poor possess in "peace what they have rightfully acquired; and that no "thief find a place where he may secure the property "which he has stolen." After a few regulations for this purpose he proceeds: "Again it is my will that the "Danes select for themselves the best laws in their "power. This permission I have granted you, and will "grant you, as long as I live, for the fidelity which you "have always borne to me. Among the English I and "my witan have fixed proportionate fines for different "transgressions; and my wish is that you do the same "with discretion and for my interest. And let the Earl "Oslac and all the military men, who dwell in this earl-"dom, observe it: and let copies be made, and sent to "the ealdormen Ælfere, and Ægilwin, that it may come "to the knowledge of all, both rich and poor. As long "as I live, I will be to you a faithful lord, and most kind "to all who shall be careful to keep my peace *."

But Edgar, to preserve the tranquillity of his dominions, did not depend solely on the fidelity of the Northumbrians. Every year, about the commencement of summer, when the sea-kings issued forth in quest of adventures, directions were given for the ship-fyrd, or naval expedition. A fleet of three hundred and sixty sail was divided into three squadrons, stationed on the three coasts of the island; and the king, successively embarking in each, made by sea the circuit of his dominions. This annual parade of his power intimidated the northern chieftains, who conducted their piratical hosts to other shores, where they were equally tempted

* Leg. Sax. 80, 82. Thorpe i. 272. Ælfere was ealdorman of the Danes in the north of Mercia, Ægilwin or Aylwin of those in East-Anglia.

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by the hope of plunder, and less dismayed by the probability of resistance *.

Proud of his ascendency, Edgar assumed the most lofty titles. He styled himself king of the English, and of all the nations dwelling around, monarch of all Albion and of the kings of the isles †. We are assured that the princes of the Scots and Britons did him service as vassals ‡; and, if we may believe one of his charters, all the islands between Britain and Norway, the city of Dublin, and the greater part of Ireland, had submitted to his authority §. In lieu of the tribute which his predecessors had imposed on the Welsh, he exacted an annual present of the heads of three hundred wolves: and so effectual was the expedient that in four years that race of ferocious animals was entirely extirpated ‖. At the invitation of Alfsi, bishop of Durham, and the two earls of Northumbria, Kenneth, king of Scotland, A. D. 971. visited Edgar in London. From the English monarch he received valuable presents, silks, rings, and gems, and one hundred ounces of pure gold; but the principal object of his journey was to solicit as a favour, or to demand as a right, the cession of the province of Lothian. It formerly belonged to the Northumbrian kings, who had pushed their conquests and colonies to the frith of Forth ¶: but its proximity to the Scots exposed it to frequent inroads, and its remoteness from the present seat of government rendered it unproductive to the royal treasury. By Edgar the matter was referred to his ministers, who were induced by the poverty and distance of the province to decide in favour of Kenneth. Lothian was transferred to the crown of Scotland on the condition that its inhabitants should be permitted to retain

* Malm. 33. Sim. 160. Mailros, 150. These writers make the ships amount to 3600 The number appears to me enormous. I have therefore retrenched a cipher.

† Ing. 42. 46, 47. Bed. App. 776. ‡ Hunt. 204. Sim. 159. West. 192.

§ Dugdale, i. 140. ‖ Malm. 32. Carad. 56

¶ Bede, speaking of Abercorn, says: in monasterio Æbbercurnig, posito quidem in regione Anglorum, sed in vicinia freti, quod Anglorum terras Pictorumque disterminat. Bed. iv. 26.

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their language, laws, and customs*: and the Scottish prince obtained an additional grant of twelve manors in different parts of England for his accommodation, as often as he came to do homage to the Saxon Bretwalda.

In the internal administration of the government, Edgar exhibited an example worthy the imitation of future kings. He usually spent the winter months in making progresses through the different counties, everywhere reforming abuses, inquiring into the conduct of the magistrates, and listening to the complaints of the people. He was most anxious that the poor should obtain justice equally with the rich. By his authority family feuds were suppressed, and men were compelled to submit the decision of their quarrels to the legal tribunals. He restored the coinage to its legitimate weight and purity; enforced the punishment of exile against malefactors convicted of atrocious offences, and almost extinguished the crime of robbery, by the vigilance with which he caused the guilty to be pursued, and by the impediments which his laws opposed to the transfer of stolen property†. The inhabitants of Thanet had long been addicted to acts of piracy. In 969 they plundered several merchant-ships on their voyage from York: but the ealdorman of Kent, by order of the king, immediately entered the isle, pillaged the country, and hanged the most guilty; one of the many instances of military execution, which in that age the state of society and the imperfection of judicial proceedings might perhaps render expedient‡.

The tranquillity of Edgar's reign, his undisputed superiority over the neighbouring princes, and his attention to the welfare of his people, have contributed to

* Walling. 545. West. 193. Does not this sufficiently account for the prevalence of the English language in the low-lands of Scotland? The presence of Kenneth in London is attested by his subscription to a charter in the Monasticon, i. 27.

† Leg. Sax. 77. 80. MS. Cleop. 79. Obs. 110. Chron. Sax. 116. Malmes. 150. Malm. 32, 33.

‡ Chron. Sax. 121. West. 192. Non ut hostis insaniens, sed ut rex male mala puniens. Hunt. 204

throw a lustre around his memory: the reformation of the church, undertaken by the prelates, and effected with the aid of his authority, though it was received with gratitude by his contemporaries, has been marked with unmerited censure by modern writers. The Danish invasion had both relaxed the sinews of ecclesiastical discipline, and dissolved the greater number of the monastic and clerical establishments. The most opulent monasteries had been laid in ruins by the rapacity of the barbarians; and their lands, without an owner, had been seized by the crown, or had been divided among the nearest and most powerful thanes. Under former kings, efforts had been made to restore the monastic order, but they had proved ineffectual. The prejudices against it were nourished by the great proprietors now in possession of its ancient revenues; even the monastery of Ethelingey, which Alfred had peopled with foreign monks, had been gradually deserted; and the two abbeys of Glastonbury and Abingdon, the fruits of the zeal of Dunstan, had been dissolved by the resentment of Edwy. The clerical order was more fortunate. Though shattered and disfigured, it had survived the tempest. But the friends of religious severity, when they compared the clergy of their day with the clergy of ancient times, saw much in their conduct to lament and correct. Formerly they lived in communities under particular regulations; and their seclusion from temporal pursuits insured the faithful discharge of their spiritual functions. But during the Danish wars they had been dispersed amidst their relatives, had divided among themselves the revenues of their respective churches, and, substituting others for the performance of the service, indulged in the pleasures and dissipation of the laity. But that which gave particular offence to the more devout was their marriages. It is most certain, that during the first two centuries of the Saxon church the profession of celibacy was required from every clergyman advanced to the orders of priest, or

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deacon, or sub-deacon*: but amid the horrors of successive invasions the injunctions of the canons had been overlooked or contemned; and, on many occasions, necessity compelled the prelates to ordain, for the clerical functions, persons who had already engaged in the state of matrimony. Similar causes had produced similar effects in the maritime provinces of Gaul: and Dunstan had witnessed, during his exile, the successful efforts of the abbot Gerard to restore the ancient discipline in the churches of Flanders†. Animated by his example, the metropolitan made a first essay to raise the monastic establishments from their ruins; and his labours were zealously seconded by two active co-operators, the bishops Oswald and Ethelwold. The former governed the church of Worcester: the latter, his favourite disciple, had been placed at his request in the see of Winchester. To them Edgar was induced to sell, or grant, the lands of the monasteries, which had fallen to the crown; and of those which remained in the hands of individuals, a portion was recovered by purchase, and still more by the voluntary resignation of the possessors. Persons were soon found ready to embrace an institute recommended by the prelates, and sanctioned by the king: as fast as buildings could be erected, they were filled with colonies of monks and their novices; and within a few years the great abbeys of Ely, Peterborough, Thorney, and Malmsbury, rose from their ashes, and recovered the opulence and the splendour which they had formerly enjoyed.

The next object of the metropolitan was the reformation of the more dissolute among the clergy, principally in the two dioceses of Winchester and Worcester. For this purpose a commission was obtained from Rome; and a law was enacted, that every priest, deacon, and subdeacon should live chastely, or be ejected from his

* Bed. i. 27; v. 21. Wilk. con. p. 112. 133, 134. 136.
† Vit S. Gerar. sæc. v. Bened. p. 272.

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A. D. 964. benefice.* Oswald, whose zeal was tempered with lenity, soon converted the canons of his cathedral and of Winchelcomb into communities of monks. Ethelwold met with a more stubborn resistance; and after a considerable delay was compelled to recur to the civil magistrate. Armed with the royal authority, he successively transferred the prebendaries to other situations which he had prepared for them in his diocese,† and supplied their places with monks whom he had selected from his favourite convent at Abingdon. There was nothing now to arrest the progress of monachism. The laity had caught the spirit of the prelates: several opulent noblemen erected monasteries on their respective demesnes; and the king publicly gloried in the assertion, that though the order was nearly extinct at his accession, almost fifty abbeys had been established during his reign‡.

It was the pride of Edgar to display his opulence and authority; to be surrounded by prelates, nobles, and the princes his vassals; and to distribute among them presents of greater or less value in proportion to their respective ranks. Hence it will excite surprise that a prince of this character, living in an age which attached so much importance to the regal unction, should have permitted thirteen years of his reign to elapse before he was crowned: nor is it less extraordinary that of the many historians who relate the circumstance, not one has thought proper to assign the reason. The ceremony was at length performed at Bath with the usual solemnity, and in the presence of an immense concourse of spectators (11 May, 973.) Thence he proceeded on

* Eadmer, 200. Wilk. con. 239, 247. I have omitted the celebrated speech attributed to Edgar on this occasion, because it is probably a declamation composed by some rhetorician.

† We are told that some of the ejected prebendaries reclaimed the lands of which they had been deprived; that in a council at Winchester Dunstan was inclined, at the prayer of the king and nobility, to allow them another trial; but that he was deterred by a supernatural voice from a crucifix, saying, "Make no change; your former decision was right." I mention this fable, as it occupies a prominent place in most modern histories, but is not to be found in any Anglo-Saxon writer, not even in Bridferth's contemporary life of St. Dunstan, or Wulfstan's life of St. Ethelwold. We are indebted for it to writers after the conquest.

‡ Chron. Sax. 117. Ingulf. 45, 47. Osbern, 111. Wolstan, vit. Ethelwoldi, 614. Ead. 200. Hist. Rames. 400. The rule observed in all these monasteries

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board the fleet, and after a long cruise repaired to Chester to receive the homage of eight princes, Kenneth, king of Scotland, his son Malcolm of Cumberland, Mac Orric of Anglesey and the isles, Jukil of Westmoreland, Jago of Galloway, and Howel, Dyfnwal, and Griffith of Wales. The ceremony was opened with a splendid procession by water on the Dee. Edgar stepping into his barge seated himself at the helm: and the vassal kings taking the oars rowed him to the church of St. John the Baptist; the prelates and thanes followed in their barges, while the banks were lined with spectators and the air resounded with acclamations. At his return he is said to have observed to those around him: "My successors may think "themselves kings, when they can command the service "of the like number of princes *.

Edgar had happily no opportunity of acquiring military glory: but on one occasion he is said to have proved that he was not deficient in personal courage. Kenneth, alluding to his spare form and low stature, had said that it was a disgrace to so many brave men to obey the authority of a dwarf. The words were reported to the king, who dissembling his anger, conducted Kenneth into a neighbouring wood, and bade him draw his sword, and learn who was the fitter to command the other. The king of Scots apologized for the jest, and disarmed his resentment †.

Edgar lived only two years after his coronation, and died in 975 ‡. Like the other princes of his family he

was that of St. Benedict, with the addition of a few national customs (Apost. Bened. app. par. 3, p. 80). The Benedictine monks were first introduced among the Northumbrians in 661 (Edd. vit. Wilf. xlv.), among the West-Saxons in 675 (Malm. de Pont. v. 344, 353, 356), and among the Mercians in 709 (Wilk. con. p. 71).

* Chron. Sax. 121. Malros, 150. Flor. 607. West. 192. † Malm. 32.

‡ Chron. Sax. 122. The chronicle has preserved parts of the poems made on the occasion. I shall offer a literal version of some passages to the curiosity of the reader. "Here ended his earthly joys Edgar England's "king: and chose the light of another world, beauteous and happy. Here "Edgar departed, the ruler of the Angels, the joy of the West-Saxons, the "defender of the Mercians. That was known afar among many nations. "Kings beyond the baths of the sea-fowl worshipped him far and wide: they "bowed to the king as one of their own kin. There was no fleet so proud, "there was no host so strong, as to seek food in England, while this noble

married at a very early age. His first wife Elfleda the fair, survived their union but two years, and left him a son, Edward, who succeeded him. By his second wife Elfrida, the daughter of Ordgar, earl of Devonshire, he had two sons, Edmund, who died in his infancy, and Ethelred, who ascended the throne after the murder of Edward. Most writers have contented themselves with telling us that the king married Elfrida after the death of Ethelwold her first husband: but Malmsbury, on the faith of an ancient ballad, has transmitted to us a story probably invented by his enemies. According to this account Elfrida was possessed, as the heroine of every romance should be, of unparalleled beauty and accomplishments. Edgar commissioned Ethelwold, the son of his foster-father Athelstan, and his favourite minister, to visit Ordgar, and report his opinion of the daughter. The heart of the ealdorman was captivated. He forgot his duty, wooed and married Elfrida, and on his return informed his master, that, though she might grace the house of a subject, she did not become the splendour of a throne. But the secret was quickly betrayed: it reached the ears of the king; and he announced to his astonished favourite that he intended to visit the bride. Ethelwold had now recourse to tears and entreaties. He disclosed to his wife the whole transaction, and conjured her to conceal her beauty from the eyes of the king. But Elfrida had ceased to love. and he appeared to her in the light of an enemy, since he had deprived her of a crown. She received the king in her gayest attire, and employed all her arts to engage his notice and win his affections. Edgar retired, convinced of the perfidy of his friend, and of the superior beauty of the lady. For a while he disguised his intentions: but took the opportunity, while they were hunting together in the forest of Wherwell, to run his spear through the body of

"king ruled the kingdom. He reared up God's honor, he loved God's law, he "preserved the people's peace, the best of all the kings that were before in "the memory of man. And God was his helper: and kings and earls bowed "to him: and they obeyed his will: and without battle he ruled all as he "willed."—P. 116, 122.

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Ethelwold. It is needless to add, that he married the widow *.

I should not have noticed this tale, so improbable in itself, and supported by such questionable evidence, had it not found a place in most of our modern histories. There is another, which is better authenticated, and attributes to Edgar the violation of Wulfrith, a young lady educated in the convent of Wilton, who to elude his pursuit, had covered herself with the veil of one of the sisters. She bore him a daughter, Editha, afterwards abbess of Wilton. For this offence the king was severely reproved by the archbishop, and submitted to a course of penance during the term of seven years.

EDWARD, THE MARTYR.

It was unfortunate that the two sons of Edgar were children at the time of their father's death. Edward had reached his thirteenth, Ethelred only his seventh year. There could be no doubt of Edward's claim to the crown: the right of primogeniture, the will of his father, and the extreme youth of his brother, all pleaded in his favour. Yet his succession was opposed by a party, who objected to his character, that he was of a harsh and cruel disposition; and to his birth, that he was born before either his father or mother had been crowned ‡. At the head of the faction was Elfrida, whose ambition hoped to obtain the sceptre for her own son, and who, to strengthen his interests, openly proclaimed herself the patroness of the ejected clergy. The pretensions of Ethelred were espoused by them, by their numerous partisans, and in particular by Alfere, the powerful earl of Mercia; while, on the other hand, all the prelates, and the earls of Essex and East-Anglia, maintained with equal obstinacy the superior claim of Edward. The controversy threatened to involve the nation in the horrors of civil war. Alfere wrested from the monks their new

A. D. 975.

* Chron. Sax. 124. Malm. i. 258. Flor. 608. Hunt 204. Mailros 151.

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of civil war. Alfere wrested from the monks their new establishments in Mercia: Oslac of Northumbria was driven by his enemies into exile: and Alfwin and Alfwold armed the East-Anglians in their own defence. At length a general meeting of the witan was held: and Dunstan so victoriously proved the right of Edward, that he was chosen king without further opposition, and was crowned with the usual solemnity *.

The young prince did not sway the sceptre four years. His constitution and his virtues promised a long and prosperous reign: the ambition of Elfrida cut short his days, and blasted the hopes of his subjects. One morning as he was hunting, he stopped at Corfe castle in Dorsetshire, the residence of his step-mother. While the unsuspicious prince was in the act of drinking a cup of mead on horseback, he was stabbed in the belly by an assassin. He immediately put spurs to his horse, but his bowels protruding from the wound, he sank from his seat, and was dragged by the stirrup. His servants following the track of his blood, found him breathless, and buried him privately at Wareham (18 March, 978). A few years later Dunstan and Alfere took up his remains, and interred them with royal magnificence at Shaftsbury †.

During his reign happened the tragic catastrophe at Calne, which has furnished modern writers with a pretext for accusing the primate of impiety and murder. According to some Anglo-Norman historians, on the death of certain of the ejected prebendaries of Winchester, their heirs advanced a claim to the lands of which the prebendaries had been deprived, and retained, at a great expense, a celebrated orator, Beornhelm, to plead their cause.‡ It

* Chron. Sax. 123. Malros, 151. Ingulf, 54. Hist. Rames. 412, 413. Malm. 39.
† Chron. Sax. 124, 125. Ing. 54. Malm. 34. Langtoft. p. 628, edit. Hearne.
‡ These Anglo-Norman historians are Osbern and Eadmer, who wrote from documents which, on their own showing, were far from authentic. Ang. Sax. ii. 88, 211. Both agree that the controversy at Calne concerned only the children of the deceased prebendaries of Winchester, per successionem filiorum (Osb. 112). Illis huic vitæ subtractis filiorum cupientes recuperare quæ perdiderant in parentibus suis (Eadmer 220). I mention this because it is customary to represent the cause heard at Calne as the cause of the whole body of ejected clergy. The expelled clergy, says Dr. Lappenberg, had fled to Scotland, and now brought back with them from that country the excel-

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was heard before the king and witan at Calne, when Dunstan, if we may believe modern writers, had the impudence to fabricate a miracle in defence of the monks. By his orders, as they tell us, the floor of the room, destined to contain the members of the council, was loosened from the wall: during the deliberation the temporary supports were removed; and while the primate was secure in his seat above, the rest of the assembly were precipitated to the ground. Yet if we divest the fact of its modern embellishments, it will be reduced to this: that the floor sank under the accumulated weight of the crowd: that the archbishop had the good fortune to support himself by a beam, whilst that of the others some were killed, and many were hurt by the fall.* More than this was unknown to any ancient historian; the contrivance and object ascribed to Dunstan are the fictions of recent historians.

ETHELRED.

Elfrida now reaped the harvest of her crimes and ambition. By the death of Edward there remained but one prince of the blood royal: and the absence of other claimants compelled the prelates and thanes, though with no small reluctance, to bestow the crown on the son of the murderess†. The ceremony was performed at Kingston, on the Sunday after Easter (14 April, 978): and the following is the oath which was administered to the king by archbishop Dunstan, previously to the coronation. "In the name of the most holy Trinity I promise, "first, that the church of God and all christian people A. D. 978.

lent Scottish bishop Biornhelm, for the purpose of aiding them with its talents against Dunstan. Thorpe's Lappenberg ii. 146. Biornhelm is an Anglo-Saxon name. How he came to be a Scottish or Irish bishop, is unknown. Eadmer says, Scotiam miserunt et inde quendam prægrandis ut fama ferebat, eloquentiæ virum, Biornelmum nomine, magno conductum pretio adduxerunt. Ang. Sax. ii. 220. The claimants were the sons of the prebendaries ejected from Winchester, and pretended an hereditary right to the lands formerly held by their fathers. Chron. Sax. 124. Malm. 84. Flor. 608. Hunt. 204. Mail. 151.

† A weak attempt was made to raise an opposition in favor of Editha, the natural daughter of Edgar of Wulfrith. She herself rejected the offer. Vit. S. Eadgithæ, in act SS. Bened. p. 638.

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" shall enjoy true peace under my government; secondly, " that I will prohibit all manner of rapine and injustice " to men of every condition; thirdly, that in all judg- " ments I will cause equity to be united with mercy, " that the most clement God may, through his eternal " mercy, forgive us all. Amen *."

Ethelred was only ten years of age, handsome in person, and amiable in disposition. But his spirit had been broken by the violence and barbarity of his mother. When he wept at the untimely death of Edward, she considered his tears a reproach to herself, and punished him so severely, that his life was thought to be in danger. But as he advanced in age, her influence gradually declined; and she at last bade farewell to the court, and built the two monasteries of Ambresbury, and Whorwel. In one of these she spent the remainder of her days, bewailing her past misconduct, and endeavouring to atone for the scandal which she had given, by the publicity of her repentance †.

The reign of her son was long and unfortunate. Though guiltless himself, he enjoyed the benefit of Edward's murder, and, on that account, appeared on the throne stained with the blood of an elder and unoffending brother. Even in his youth he did not possess the affection of his subjects: during his manhood, he incurred their hatred by his apathy for their sufferings, his disinclination for business, and his immoderate love of pleasure. The northern pirates, who had long respected the coasts of England, soon discovered the distracted state of the kingdom: the depredations of the last century were renewed with still greater success; and, as if heaven had conspired with men to avenge the blood of Edward, the horrors of invasion were aggravated by several years of scarcity, by a contagious distemper among the cattle, and a dysentery most fatal to the hu-

* Hick. gram. præf. —. MS. Claud. A. 3. It is in substance the same oath which had long been taken by christian kings among the northern nations. See Martene, ii. 188. 197. 199. 211.

† Malm. 34. West ad ann. 978.

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man species. It would be difficult to select a period in English history, in which the nation was visited with such a multiplicity of calamities, as during the protracted reign of Ethelred *.

The profession of piracy among the Northmen had, in the last century, received many considerable checks. The vigilance, with which the coasts of Gaul and Britain were guarded, had diminished the chances of success: the more opulent adventurers, willing to enjoy the fruits of their plunder, sought to excite a spirit of industry among their countrymen; and powerful princes had arisen who, for their own security, laboured to put down the faithless and ferocious sea-kings. A few chieftains, however, still followed the example of their fathers; and one of these rovers in 980, ventured to make a descent near Southampton. His temerity was rewarded with an ample booty. With similar success he repeated the attempt on the isle of Thanet; and in succeeding years the coasts of Cornwall and Devonshire, then the isle of Portland, afterwards Watchet in Somersetshire, were successively visited and plundered by the barbarians. These, indeed, were but momentary inroads. They might harass, they could not alarm. But in 991 a more formidable armament under Justin and Guthmund reduced Ipswich. Thence the Northmen proceeded as far as Malden, to meet the ealdorman Brithnoth, who had formerly gained a splendid victory on the same spot, and whom they now challenged a second time to the combat. Accompanied by his retainers, Brithnoth hastened to oppose the enemy. As he passed by Ramsey, the abbot Wulfsig invited him to dinner, with seven of his thanes. "Go, tell thy master," replied the chief to the messenger, "that as I cannot fight, so I will not dine, "without my followers." From Ramsey he proceeded to Ely, where his little army was hospitably received by the monks. In the morning he entered the chapter-house,

A. D. 991.

* Chron. Sax. 125. Ing. 55, 56. Malm. 34.

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and made to them the gift of several manors, on condition that if it were his lot to fall in the battle he should be buried by them in their church. For fourteen days he foiled all the attempts of the Danes: but in the last engagement his followers rushed with blind impetuosity on the multitude of their enemies. It was the combat of despair against numbers. Brithnoth fell: his head was conveyed to Denmark by the invaders as the trophy of victory, the trunk was found by the monks of Ely and interred in their church. To preserve the memory of her husband, his widow, Ethelfled, embroidered on silk the history of his exploits, which she suspended over his tomb: a more lasting memorial was raised by the genius of an Anglo-Saxon sceop, whose poem on the valor and patriotism of Brithnoth has been lately published.*

* See Thorpe's Analecta, p. 121. The references here made to Mr. Benjamin Thorpe's works are added by Dr. Lingard in his last edition, in which he has enlarged the text from these new authorities.

In his allusion to the poem on Brithnoth's death, he seems not to have observed that Mr. Conybeare had printed a translation of it in 1826. The following passage will serve as an illustration of this valuable relic of Saxon literature.

"Then the [Danish] chieftain raised up his weapon, his buckler for his defence, and stepped forth against that lord. The earl [Brithnoth] with equal eagerness advanced against the carl; either meditated evil against the other. The sea chief then sped a southern dart, so that the lord of the army was wounded; he manœuvred with his shield so that the shaft burst, and the spear sprang back and recoiled; the chief was incensed, and pierced with his dart the exulting viking who had given him that wound. Skilful was the hero: he caused his frarca to traverse the neck of the youth; he directed his hand so that with sudden destruction he might reach his life; then speedily he shot off another, so that his mail was pierced, and he was wounded in the breast through its ringed chains; and the javelin's point stood in his heart. Then was the earl blithe: the stern warrior laughed, and uttered thanks to his Creator for the work of that day which the Lord had given him.

"But then some one of the enemies let fly a dart from his hand, which transfixed the noble thane of Ethelred: there stood by his side a youth not fully grown, a boy in the field, the son of Wulfstan, Wulfmaer the young; he eagerly plucked from the chief the bloody weapon, and sent it to speed again on its destructive journey: the dart passed on till it laid on the earth him who had too surely reached his lord.

"Then a treacherous soldier approached the earl to plunder from the chieftain his gems, his vestments, and his rings, and his ornamented sword; but Brithnoth drew from its sheath his battle-axe, broad and brave of edge, and smote him on his corslet; very eagerly the pirate left him, when he felt the force of the chieftain's arm. But at that moment his large hilted sword drooped to the earth, — he could no longer hold his hard glaive or wield his weapon; yet the hoary warrior still endeavoured to utter his commands:

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The ravages committed by the Danes on the defenceless inhabitants of the sea-coast suggested the idea of purchasing their forbearance by the offer of a sum of money; and Siric, archbishop of Canterbury, with the ealdermen Ethelweard and Ælfric, having obtained the royal permission, paid to them a contribution of ten thousand pounds, to secure from hostility the several districts, which they governed "under the king's hand." This led to a more comprehensive treaty, made by Ethelred and "all his witan," with the army under Anlaf (Olave), and Tustin and Guthmund, son of Stetiga. According to the original document, it was mutually agreed that worldly frith or peace should thenceforth exist between the two parties; the strangers should aid the king and his subjects against every naval armament which might commit hostilities on the English coast, and the natives should supply the strangers with provisions as long as they were in the king's service. That neither party should give harbour to refugees from the other, whether the latter were slaves, or malefactors, or foemen; that if an individual of one nation was slain by one of the other nation, the slayer should either be delivered up, or should pay a compensation of thirty pounds, if the slain were a freeman, of one pound, if he were a slave; and that if, in an affray, either within or without a borough, more than one person were slain, the compensation should be made as above, — but if the number amounted to eight, it should be considered a breach of the grith, and the public force should be employed to seize the perpetrators alive or dead, or "their nearest "kindred, head for head." For this treaty the Danes

he bade the warlike youths, his brave companions, march forward. Then might he no longer stand boldly on his feet.

"He looked to heaven. 'I thank thee, Lord of the nations, for all the prosperity which I have experienced on earth; now have I, O mild Creator, the utmost need that thou shouldst grant grace to my spirit, that my soul may proceed to thee, into thy keeping, O Lord of angels, that it may take its departure in peace. I am a suppliant to thee that the destruction of hell may not overwhelm it.'" — AM. EDIT.

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are said to have received twenty-two thousand pounds, which sum may, perhaps, include the ten thousand already mentioned.*

From this time we hear no more of Justin and Guthmund, who probably returned home with their followers: but it was plainly intended by the conditions of the treaty that the adventurers should remain some time in the English havens as Ethelred's allies, and that they should be permitted to mix on shore with friends under the king's peace. Whether their conduct during the winter called for revenge, or provoked suspicion, we are ignorant; but the next year a powerful fleet was prepared at London, and despatched under the ealdormen Ælfric and Thored, and the bishops Ælfstan and Æscwy, with secret orders to surprise and capture the Danish armament, as it lay at anchor in peace and security. But Ælfric, who was a traitor and already leagued with the Northmen, joined them in the evening, informed them of the impending danger, and urged them to immediate flight. In the pursuit, Ælfric's vessel was captured. The traitor himself had the fortune to escape: but the eyes of his son Algar were put out by the orders of Ethelred; either because the young man had been an accomplice in the treason, or because revenge impelled the king to punish the guilt of the father on his guiltless offspring.†

In the following year the Danes transferred their arms from the south to the north of England. Bamborough was carried by storm: the three chieftains appointed to command the natives deserted to the invaders; and the coast on both sides of the Humber was successively ravaged by the barbarians. But in 994 two new and more powerful leaders appeared; Sweyn,

* See the treaty in Thorpe's Institutes, &c. i. 284—288; vii. That it should be referred to this year is plain, because Justin and Guthmund, the son of Stetiga, were the leaders of the Danes who fought against Brithnoth (Hov. f. 245, b.); and it was with these also that Sirid, Ethelwerd and Ælfric, made the agreement for 10,000*l.* — Chron. Sax.; Hoved; and Hunt, ad ann. 991.

† Chron. Sax. 127. Malm. 85. Flor.

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king of Denmark, and Olave, king of Norway. The former had mounted the throne by the murder of his father; had been twice expelled by the arms of Eric of Sweden; and had twice recovered his dominions. Olave was the son of Tryggva, a pirate by profession, who had repeatedly visited and pillaged the coasts of Ireland, Britain, and Normandy. From the Scilly isles, where a hermit induced him to embrace Christianity, he had sailed to the Orkneys; had subdued and converted the natives with the logic of his sword; and at his arrival on the coast of Norway had been unexpectedly hailed king by the chieftains who had deposed Hacon the Bad. A confederacy was formed between the Dane and the Norwegian, who with ninety-four ships sailed up the Thames, to attack the city of London. They were repulsed with considerable loss; but, to revenge their disappointment, they ravaged the neighbouring counties of Essex, Kent, Sussex and Hampshire. Terror and distrust prevailed again in the councils of Ethelred. The invaders had mounted a body of horsemen to carry their devastations to a greater distance: the king, who dared not collect an army to oppose their excursions, offered them the sum of sixteen thousand pounds, and winter-quarters at Southampton, as the price of their forbearance. The conditions were accepted. Olave accompanied the prelates Elphege and Ethelward to Andover; received from the bishop of Winchester the sacrament of confirmation; and promised the king that he would never more draw the sword against his christian brethren. Sweyn, on the departure of his confederate, was compelled to follow him; but he never forgave what he deemed a breach of faith in the Norwegian. Olave employed his time in endeavouring to convert his subjects; and some years afterwards was surprised by Sweyn at sea near the islet of Wollin. Unable to contend with success against the multitude, and disdaining to surrender to his enemy, he terminated the A. D. 994.

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unequal contest by leaping from his ship into the waves*.

During the four following years different parts of the coast were repeatedly laid waste by the pirates. At last in 998 Ethelred succeeded in collecting a powerf[illegible]t and army: but the commanders, we are told, w[illegible] cret friends of the Danes; who by their advice q[illegible]ted the kingdom, and sailed to the mouth of the Seine. The king, unable to meet with the Northmen, led his troops the following year into Cumberland, which he almost desolated by his ravages, while his fleet, prevented by the weather from gaining the station assigned to it, sailed to the Isle of Man, and depopulated that nursery of pirates†.

In 1001 the Danes returned from Normandy. They landed in Hampshire; carried their devastations as far as the Bristol channel; and retracing their steps passed to the Isle of Wight. In this expedition they had fought and gained two battles; and had reduced to ashes Waltham, Taunton, Pen, Clifton, and several smaller towns. The king could discover no better expedient than that of ransom; and the barbarians retired on the payment of twenty-four thousand pounds‡.

A. D. 1002. Ethelred, in the seventeenth year of his age, had married Elfleda, the daughter of the ealdorman Thored, who bore him six sons, and four daughters. After her death he obtained the hand of Emma, a Norman princess, who on her marriage, assumed the name of Elgiva. The king and her father Richard had formerly been enemies. The origin of their quarrel is unknown: but Ethelred had prepared a fleet for the invasion of Normandy, and Richard had arrested all the English merchants and pilgrims in his dominions, thrown many

* Chron. Sax. 127—129. Mail. 152. Sim. Dunc. 163. Sax. Gram. 184. 189. Snorre, 222. 345.

† Chron. Sax. 130, 130. Mail. 153. Fordun asserts that the Cumbrians had refused to pay their share of the Dane-gelt, iv. 35.

‡ Chron. Sax. 131, 132. Flor. 611.

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into prison, and condemned several to death. Pope John XV. undertook to reconcile the two princes; and his legate Leo, the vice-bishop of Treves, visited first Ethelred, and then Richard. At his request they sent commissioners to Rouen; by whom it was agreed that all ancient causes of dissension should be forgotten; that a perpetual peace should subsist between the king of England and the marquess of Normandy, their children born and to be born, and all their true liegemen; that every infraction of this peace should be repaired by satisfactory compensation; and that neither prince should harbour the subjects nor the enemies of the other without a written permission. This, the oldest treaty now extant between any of our kings and a foreign power, is drawn up in the name of the pope, and confirmed by the oaths and marks of one bishop and two thanes on the part of Ethelred, and of one bishop and two barons on the part of Richard*. The king's union with a Norman princess was calculated to improve this friendship between the two nations, and to secure a powerful support against the Danes. But Ethelred's conduct marred his hopes. By his neglect of his young queen, and his repeated infidelities, he alienated her affections, and provoked the resentment of her brother, Richard II., who had succeeded his father in the dukedom.

Emma had reached England in the spring: but the rejoicings occasioned by the marriage were scarcely concluded when Ethelred planned and executed a measure, which will cover his name with everlasting infamy. He ordered a general massacre of the Danes on the same day in every county. In the beginning of November, his officers in the towns and counties received from him secret orders to organize, against a certain day, a general massacre of the Danes within their respective jurisdictions. On the 13th of that month, the festival

* Malm. 35, 36. West. 196. The treaty was signed at Rouen, March 1st, 991. Richard was called indifferently, marquess, or earl, or duke.

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of St. Brice, the unsuspecting victims with their wives and families were seized by the populace; and the horror of the murder was in many places aggravated by every insult and barbarity which national hatred could suggest. At London they fled for security to the churches, and were massacred in crowds round the altars. The most illustrious of the sufferers was Gunhilda, the sister of Sweyn, who had embraced Christianity, and had married Palig, a naturalized Northman. By the orders of the royal favourite, the infamous Edric, her children and husband were slaughtered before her eyes. In the agonies of death she is said to have foretold the severe revenge, which her brother would one day inflict both on him who commanded, and on those who perpetrated the murder.*

Of the motives which prompted this bloody tragedy, and of the extent to which it was carried, we are ignorant. In all probability it was confined to the Danes who had settled in England since the king's accession, among whom were chieftains whom he had allured by grants of lands to his service, and inferior adventurers, who, in consequence of his frequent treaties with the invaders, had mixed with the natives, and remained among them under protection of his grith or peace. Of the first class we know that Palig, though he had received a princely inheritance, and sworn allegiance to the English monarch, had joined his kinsman Sweyn in his last invasion, and it is probable that many others, both chieftains and private individuals, frequently acted in the same manner. Hence there can be no doubt that Ethelred had recourse to this dreadful expedient of a general massacre, as a punishment due to their past disloyalty, and a measure of precaution to prevent its recurrence on some subsequent occasion.†

* Malm. 35. Hunt. 206. West. 200, 201.

† Huntingdon's account is the most deserving of credit. Omnes Dacos, qui cum *pace* erant in Angliâ fecit mactari; de quo scelere in puericia nostra quosdam vetustissimos loqui audivimus, quod in unamquamque urbem rex occultas misit epistolas, secundum quas Angli Dacos omnes eodem die et eadem hora vel gladiis truncaverunt impremeditatos, vel igne cremaverunt simul comprehensis. Hunt, ibid.

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In the following spring Sweyn was again at sea with a powerful armament, and burning to avenge the blood of his sister and his countrymen. By the negligence or perfidy of Hugo, the Norman governor appointed by Emma, he obtained possession of Exeter, and thence poured his barbarians into the heart of Wiltshire. A numerous army had been collected to oppose him under the command of Ælfric, who had again made his peace with the king: but the hoary traitor, by a counterfeit sickness, paralyzed the efforts of his followers; and Sweyn indulged without molestation in the pursuit of plunder and vengeance. During four years England presented the mournful spectacle of a nobility divided by faction, treason and murder; of a king unequal to the duties of his station; and of a people the sport of an exasperated and vindictive enemy. If the winter afforded a pause from the horrors of war, the barbarians were always prepared to recommence their devastations in the spring: if a season of scarcity compelled them to retire for a while, they constantly re-appeared with the following harvest. Each county was successively the scene of their ravages: and the natives who fell into their hands experienced every species of insult, of torment, and of death. Every village, town and city, was invariably given to the flames. There were indeed instances in which the despair of the inhabitants inflicted severe punishment on the invaders: but as often as the English armies ventured to oppose them in the open field, they were routed with the most dreadful slaughter. At length in 1007 Sweyn had quenched his thirst of revenge, and consented to a peace on the payment of thirty-six thousand pounds of silver *. A. D. 1003

The enormous sums repeatedly given to the Danes had never purchased more than a temporary cessation of hostilities: and it was at last discovered that the riches of the nation might be more usefully employed in pro-

* Chron. Sax. 133—136.

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viding for its own defence, than in stimulating the rapacity of its enemies. In the witena-gemot it was determined to provide a formidable fleet, and armour for the mariners, by an assessment on all the landholders in the kingdom, and in the proportion of one ship for three hundred and ten hides, and of a helmet and breast-plate for every eight hides. The next year the most numerous armament that ever rode in the English channel, was collected at Sandwich. Ethelred himself, accompanied by his principal thanes, went on board; and every heart thrilled with the hope of victory. But this pleasing anticipation soon vanished in mistrust and disunion. Brihtric, the brother of Edric, lately appointed earl of Mercia, accused of treason Wulfnoth, the "child" of the South-Saxons. That chieftain, either conscious of guilt, or indignant at the charge, separated from the fleet with twenty ships, and commenced the profession of a sea-king. Brihtric with eighty sail undertook to bring him back "alive or dead;" but his squadron was stranded by the fury of a tempest, and every vessel was burnt by the followers of Wulfnoth. This disaster increased the confusion of the royal councils: the most groundless suspicions were entertained; Ethelred hastily returned to land; and the mariners, abandoned by their captains, steered their course up the Thames*. The departure of the English was the signal for the re-appearance of
A. D. the Danish fleet. It was no longer under the command
1009. of Sweyn, who pretended to observe his recent stipulations; but had secretly granted permission to Thurchil to revenge the death of his brother, who had perished in a former expedition†. For three years Thurchil carried fire and devastation into different parts of the kingdom. In the first he ravaged the southern counties; in the second he penetrated through East-Anglia into the fens, which had hitherto afforded a secure asylum

* Chron. Sax. 137.

† Encom. Emmæ, Maseres, p. 7. Licentiâ accepta, ut fratrem suum sibi interfectum ulciseretur. Ditmar apud Bouquet, x. 134.

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to the natives; in the third he besieged and destroyed the important city of Canterbury. Thurchil had lain before it twenty days, when the traitor Ælmer set fire to a number of houses; and while the inhabitants were employed in extinguishing the flames, the Northmen forced open one of the gates, and rushed into the city. Elphege, the archbishop, venerable for his age and virtues, threw himself into the midst of the carnage, and besought the barbarians to spare the inhabitants. He was seized, bound and dragged to behold the fate of his cathedral, in which were collected the monks and the clergy, the women and the children. A pile of wood had been reared against the wall: with shouts of triumph the fire was kindled; the flames quickly ascended the roof; and as the melted lead and falling timbers compelled the fugitives to quit their retreat, they were successively massacred before the eyes of the primate. In the evening the Danes numbered eight hundred captives: seven thousand men besides women and children had perished in the sack of the city. The life of Elphege was spared during several weeks, in the hope that he might be induced to pay a ransom of three thousand pounds: but the old man refused to solicit the aid either of his friends or the clergy; and was put to death on the Saturday after Easter, while he was labouring to impress his captors with a reverence for the doctrines of Christianity. At last Thurchil, after ravaging the greater part of thirteen counties, sold his friendship and services to Ethelred for the sum of forty-eight thousand pounds. Many of his followers accepted settlements in the island; and the mariners of five-and-forty ships swore allegiance to the monarch *. A. D. 1011. A. D. 1012.

Here the reader may pause to take a view of this fallen and devoted country. The natives had not submitted to their fate without a struggle; but numerous treasons and accumulated defeats had unnerved their

* Chron. Sax. 141, 142. Ang. Sac. ii. 135.

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courage; while repeated victories had inspired the Danes with the idea that they were invincible. We are assured on good authority that one Northman was considered an equal match for ten Englishmen*. Hence we meet with few instances of successful defence, except in the fortified cities, which were seldom reduced. London, though repeatedly besieged, still bade defiance to all the power of the invaders†. But the open country was universally abandoned to their mercy, while they systematically destroyed whatever they could not carry away, and reduced to ashes every monastery, village, and town. In consequence of these ravages the labours of agriculture were interrupted or abandoned; and in some years the scarcity was so great, that the Danes themselves were compelled to quit the island in search of provisions‡.

These calamities sprung from the ferocity of the invaders: others must be attributed to the turbulence and insubordination of the natives. Since the death of Edgar the administration of justice had been but feebly enforced; of late it had been entirely suspended. The absence of legal punishment, and the licence of a state of warfare, had left the passions of individuals without restraint; the most atrocious crimes were committed with impunity; and men sought to indemnify themselves for their own losses by the spoliation of their neighbours. On the one side relations were sold for slaves by their relations, children in the cradle by their parents; on the other the slaves often rose on their masters, pillaged their property, and then deserted to the enemy§. The thanes of each district adopted at last the general policy of the nation. Instead of uniting with their neighbours against the common enemy, they negotiated for their own security, and by the payment of a sum of money dismissed the

* Serm. Lup. apud Hicks, 103. † Chron. Sax. 138.
‡ Chron. Sax. 134.
§ Serm. Lupi apud Hicks, Diss. epis. 99. 106. Langbeck, ii. 464. 469.

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barbarians to another county, to repeat the same ravages and extort similar contributions *.

To this period must also be referred the origin of direct and annual taxation. The sums which Ethelred so frequently paid to the Northmen were raised by an impost on landed property, which did not cease with the occasion, but was retained for centuries under the pretext of providing for the defence of the kingdom†. The assessments were at first apportioned with apparent equity: but they soon gave birth to much extortion, and consequently to much misery. Wherever money was known to exist, it was required by the king's officers; and the payment of one demand was considered sufficient evidence of ability to pay a second. By these repeated exactions, joined to the depredations of the enemy, the most opulent proprietors were often reduced to a state of penury. From one instance the reader may form an idea of the others. In 1005 Godric was chosen abbot of Croyland; and in that and the seven following years the moneys levied on the monastery by the king, the ealdorman, and the inferior officers amounted on an average to the annual sum of four hundred marks. In 1013 Sweyn plundered all the manors belonging to the abbey; and crowds of the natives, fleeing from the swords of the barbarians, sought an asylum at Croyland. The benevolent old man received them with open arms; consoled them in their misfortunes; and offered them support as long as his means sufficed. The choir and the cloisters he reserved for the accommodation of his own monks and those of the neighbourhood; the body of the church was allotted to the clergy for their residence; the laymen were lodged in the other apartments of the abbey; and the women and children in temporary buildings erected in the cemetery. The charity of Godric awakened the rapacity

* Chron. Sax. 134. 140, 141.

† Hunting. v. f. 205. It was called Danegeld, and became an annual land tax of twelvepence per hide. The clergy were exempted from it. Leg. Sax Ed. Con. xi. p. 193.

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of Sweyn. Under pain of the demolition of the monastery he ordered the abbot to pay one thousand marks at Lincoln, on an appointed day; and not satisfied with this sum, extorted another thousand within the three following months. Scarcely were these demands satisfied, when the officers of Ethelred appeared. They accused Godric of being the confederate of Sweyn: the payment of the money extorted from him by violence was construed into an act of treason; and he was compelled to offer two thousand marks to the king to recover the royal favour. Harassed by these iniquitous proceedings, and reduced to a state of poverty, Godric, as a last resource, implored the protection of Norman, a powerful retainer of the ealdorman Edric; and that chieftain, in consideration of the grant of a valuable manor for the term of one hundred years, proclaimed himself the patron of the abbey, and engaged to defend it with his sword from every unjust demand *.

Report had carried to Denmark the knowledge of Thurchil's success and of his subsequent engagement with Ethelred: and Sweyn, jealous of the reputation as well as the fidelity of that chieftain, summoned all his vassals to his standard, and openly declared his intention
A. D. of attempting the conquest of England. The riches of
1013. the fleet, and the superior magnificence of the royal galley are described in terms of admiration by a contemporary historian; nor shall we refuse credit to his narrative, if we recollect that Denmark had been for centuries the depot of successful depredation †. Sweyn sailed to Sandwich; was foiled in an attempt to corrupt the Danish mercenaries; and directed his course to the mouth of the Humber. At Gainsborough he received successively the submission of the Northumbrians, of the men of Lindesey, of the Five-burghers, and of the other inhabitants on the north of the Watling-street. They were

* Ingul. 55. 57.

† Encom. Emmæ, Maseres, p. 9. Vanes in the shape of birds or dragons were fixed on the masts to point out the direction of the wind. Ibid.

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partly incorporated with his troops, and were commanded to supply him with provisions and horses. As conquest was his object, he resolved to extort by terror the submission of the southern English; and the orders, which he issued preparatory to his march, were congenial to the barbarism of the chief and his followers: to ravage the open country, pillage the churches, burn the towns, and put every male to the sword*. From the Watling-street to the Thames these instructions were faithfully observed: the inhabitants of Oxford appeased his anger by prayers and hostages; their example was followed by the citizens of Winchester; and the invader, borne forward by the tide of success, hurried his troops to the walls of London. The city was defended by Ethelred and Thurchil, whose negociations, policy, and courage baffled the stratagems and assaults of the enemy. Sweyn consoled his disappointment with the repetition of his former cruelties; and marching slowly to Bath, proclaimed himself king of England, summoned to his court the thanes of Wessex, Mercia, and Northumberland, and compelled them to swear allegiance to the king of the Danes. This general defection created alarm within the walls of the metropolis. The wavering fidelity of the citizens induced the king and Thurchil to retire with the fleet to Greenwich; and the authority of the invader was quickly established in London itself. In this emergency Ethelred yielded to despair. His wife and children with a retinue of one hundred and forty horsemen he recommended to the care of her brother Richard, and sailed clandestinely with the few thanes and prelates, who still adhered to his fortunes, to the isle of Wight. There he remained in concealment till a messenger from Emma brought him the offer of a secure asylum in Normandy†.

The successes of the northern chieftains were often

* Flor. 614. West. 201.
† Chron. Sax. 143, 144. Malm. 39. West. 202.

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attended with surprising revolutions; and their thrones, which had no firmer basis than that of terror, were overturned at the first shock. It was in the second week of January that Ethelred fled from England, and abandoned the crown to his victorious competitor: in the first week of February the unexpected death of that competitor recalled the fugitive king, and re-established his authority. Sweyn, before he died, had appointed his son Canute to succeed him; and the will of the monarch had been confirmed by the acclamations of the army *. But the English, no longer overawed by the genius of the conqueror, and considering the moment favourable for the recovery of their independence, invited Ethelred to re-ascend the throne. His son Edward met the thanes at London: it was agreed that the king should forgive all past offences, should govern according to law, and should on important occasions follow the advice of the great council; and that the thanes, on their part, should swear to support his authority, and never submit to a Danish sovereign. Ethelred, who returned about the middle of Lent, was received with enthusiasm, and instantly led an army against the enemy in Lindesey. Canute could not withstand the superior force of the English, and fled with sixty ships, leaving his associates to the mercy of the victors. The country was ravaged, and every inhabitant of Danish extraction was put to the sword. To revenge the fate of his friends Canute ordered the hostages, who had been delivered to his father, to be deprived of their ears, noses, and hands. In this mutilated state, the sons of the noblest families among the English, were landed at Sandwich, as pledges of that unsparing retribution which awaited those, who had revolted from the authority, or opposed the interests, of the Dane. He proceeded to his own country †.

A. D. 1014.

It might have been expected that the English, re-

* Encom. Emm. p. 9. † Chron. Sax. 145. Flor. 615. Hunt. 367.

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lieved from the pressure of the enemy, would have employed this interval in providing against future dangers. But distrust and treachery still distracted their attention, and divided their councils. Ethelred convoked an assembly of the witan at Oxford; and his first measure was a repetition, on a smaller scale, of that system of massacre, for which he had already suffered so severely. Many thanes of Danish descent were immolated to his jealousy or revenge: but Sigeferth and Morcar, the chieftains of the Seven-burghers, were too powerful to be openly assailed with impunity. On such occasions the policy of the king did not disdain the dagger of the assassin. The unsuspecting earls were invited to a banquet by his favourite Edric; and in the midst of the feast were murdered by a body of armed men. Their retainers, alarmed at the fate of their lords, fled to the church of St. Frideswitha; driven from the gates they sought refuge in the tower; but Ethelred, irritated by their resistance, ordered fire to be put to the sacred edifice; and had the satisfaction to see his enemies, real or supposed, perish in the conflagration. Such conduct was not of a nature to conciliate esteem, or to insure fidelity. The sequel proved that he could not command the obedience even of his own family. Edmund, his eldest son, petitioned for the possessions of the two earls. The father refused; and the young prince hastened to Malmsbury, married Algiva, the relict of Sigeferth, whom the king had confined in the monastery, rode with her into Northumberland, and by her influence prevailed on the Seven-burghers to receive him as their chieftain. Ethelred was compelled to acquiesce in this insult to his authority*. A. D. 1015.

At the commencement of winter Thurchil had received twenty-one thousand pounds as the reward of his

* Chron. Sax. 146. Malm. 39. Flor. 616. West. 202. The Five-burghers, or inhabitants of the five burghs, Leicester, Stamford, Derby, Nottingham, and Lincoln, are well known in our history. But who were the Seven-burghers? Probably the same with the addition of Chester and York.

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past services: but either suspecting the capricious temper of Ethelred, or dreading the resentment of his native sovereign, he returned with nine sail to Denmark, and obtained, after much solicitation, the forgiveness of Canute. The thousand ships which, according to the northern writers, that prince had collected for the invasion of England, are reduced to two hundred by a contemporary historian: but he describes in pompous colours, the splendour of their equipment, and assures us that among the warriors whom they bore, there was not one of ignoble birth, or past the age of manhood, or unpractised in feats of arms, or unable to contend in speed with the fleetest horse *. Sandwich was at this period "the most celebrated haven in Britain †." Here Thurchil solicited and obtained permission to obliterate the disgrace of his past disloyalty. He was the first to land; but was resolutely opposed; and if he ultimately proved successful, it was not without the loss of the bravest among his Danes. From Sandwich Canute proceeded along the southern coast, ravaged the maritime counties, and extorted the submission of the West-Saxons. An army had been collected in the north by Edmund; another in Mercia by Edric. They joined, quarrelled, and separated. The resentment of Edric led him to the standard of Canute; and his example was followed by a body of Danes, who had sworn fealty to Ethelred ‡.

The next year, after an ineffectual attempt to raise an army in the southern counties, Edmund put himself at the head of the Northumbrians, who had been called into the field by their earl Uhtred. England soon became the prey of two hostile armies, which, instead of seeking each other, contented themselves with plundering the defenceless inhabitants. The royalists wreaked

* Encom. Emm. 12. Langbeck, i. 67. 118.

† Sandwich omnium Anglorum portuum famosissimus. Encom. Emm. 13, 14.

‡ Forty *ships*. Chron. Sax. 146. Flor. 616. The amount of the Danish armies is always calculated by our old writers in *ships*. From different hints I conjecture the complement of a *ship* to have been about eighty men.

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their vengeance on the counties of Stafford, Salop, and Leicester, the inhabitants of which had refused to join their standard; and Canute, adopting a similar policy, indulged his followers with the pillage of the eastern part of Mercia, and the neighbourhood of York. Uhtred was called away to protect his own property: but finding resistance hopeless, made an offer of submission. It was accepted; and his oath of fealty was followed by an order for his execution. The Dane summoned him to attend his court at Wiheal: a curtain suspended across the hall concealed Thureband and a body of assassins; and the defenceless earl fell a victim to the perfidy of his new sovereign. Forty of his retainers shared his fate *.

Harassed with care, and worn out with disease, Ethelred had resigned the defence of the throne to the cou-

* Chron. Sax. 147, 148. Malm. 40. Encom. Emm. 15. The history of Uhtred and his family will afford striking proofs of the barbarism of the times. When Malcolm, king of Scotland, laid siege to Durham, Uhtred assumed the office of his aged father, the earl Waltheof, and defeated the enemy. After the victory he selected the most handsome of the slain, whose heads by his orders were cut off, washed in the river, and with their long braided hair fixed on stakes round the walls of the city. To reward this service Ethelred appointed him earl, and gave him his daughter Elfgiva in marriage. His former wife Siga was the daughter of the opulent thane Styr. With her he had espoused the quarrels of the family, and engaged to satisfy the revenge of his father-in-law by the death of that nobleman's enemy Thurebrand. But Thurebrand frustrated all his machinations, and at last, as appears above, obtained the consent of Canute to inflict on his foe the punishment which had been designed for himself. The murderer, however, fell soon after by the sword of Aldred, the son of the man whom he had murdered. The duty of revenge now devolved on Ceorl, the son of Thurebrand. The two chieftains spent some years in plotting their mutual destruction: by the persuasion of their friends they were reconciled; and the reconciliation was confirmed by oaths of brotherhood, and a promise of making together a pilgrimage to Rome. Aldred visited Ceorl at his house, was treated with apparent kindness, and then treacherously assassinated in the forest of Ridesdale. Ceorl escaped the fate which he merited: but at the distance of many years his sons, while they were feasting at the house of the eldest brother near York, were surprised by Waltheof the grandson of Aldred. The whole family was massacred with the exception of Sumerlede, who chanced to be absent and of Canute, who owed his life to the pity inspired by his amiable character.—Sim. Dun. 81, 82. This hereditary feud, which had now continued for five generations, was at last extinguished by the Norman conquest. From it the reader may judge of the disunion, mistrust, and treachery, which prevailed in armies composed of the retainers of chieftains, bound, by what they considered a most sacred duty, to seek the destruction of each other. It was to this that in a great measure was owing the success of the Danes.

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rage and activity of Edmund. At the arrival of Canute from Denmark, the king lay confined to his bed at Cosham in Wiltshire. For greater security he was then removed to London, where he lingered through the winter. But his constitution was broken; and on the twenty-third of April he terminated a long and calamitous reign at the very moment when the barbarians
A.D. were preparing to besiege him in his capital. Of the
1016 sons by his first wife, Edmund, Edwy, and Athelstan survived him: by Emma he left two others, Edward and Alfred*.

EDMUND.

A.D. If the personal exertions of an individual could have
1016. prevented the subjugation of England, that glorious achievement would have been accomplished by the courage and perseverance of Edmund. He was in London at the time of his father's death, and was immediately proclaimed king by the citizens. Canute was posted at Southampton, where the thanes of Wessex reluctantly acknowledged him for their sovereign. The preparations for the siege of the capital, the last bulwark of English independence, were now ready; and a fleet of three hundred and forty sail, carrying an army of twenty-seven thousand men, had been collected in the mouth of the Thames†. Within the city were Edmund and his brother, the queen dowager Emma, two bishops, and several distinguished thanes. It was easy for Canute to cut off the communication by land: to prevent the ingress and egress by water proved an undertaking of greater difficulty. As the fortifications of the bridge impeded the navigation of the river, by dint of labour a channel was dug on the right bank: through it was dragged a considerable number of ships; and the Northmen became masters of the Thames above as well as below the city. Still the valour of the inhabitants repelled every assault;

* Chron. Sax. 146. 148.

† We owe this information to Ditmar, bishop of Mersburgh, who received it the same year from an acquaintance. He tells us that Canute's ships carried on an average eighty men. Bouquet, x. 134.

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and reduced the Dane to try the influence of promises and threats. He demanded that Edmund with his brother should be delivered into his hands; that fifteen thousand pounds should be paid for the ransom of the queen, twelve thousand for that of the bishops; and that three hundred hostages should be given as pledges for the fidelity of the citizens. If these terms were accepted, he would take them under his protection: if they were refused, the city should be abandoned to pillage and the flames *.

Sensible that it required the exertions of an army to save the capital, Edmund endeavoured to escape during the darkness of the night. A boat conveyed the royal brothers through the Danish fleet †, and the men of Wessex hastened in crowds to their standard. They surprised a party of plunderers in the forest of Gillingham; but had soon to contend with Canute himself, who leaving a detachment to observe the city, had advanced with the rest of his forces to crush the growing power of his competitor. The battle of Scearstan is celebrated in the writings of our annalists. Edmund placed his most approved warriors in the front: the remainder were formed into a reserve. The Danes were assisted by Edric and Ælmer with the men of Wilts and Somerset. So obstinate was the valour of the combatants, that night alone put an end to the contest. It was renewed the next morning: when Edmund, espying his adversary, with a stroke of his battle-axe divided the shield of the Dane, and wounded his horse in the shoulder. A crowd of Northmen sprung forward to protect their monarch; and Edmund retired slowly before the multi-

* Ditmar, ibid. Chron. Sax. 148.

† Ditmar, ibid. It is singular that Ditmar's friend should call the brother of Edmund Athelstan, and say that he fell in the next engagement. Though this prince is unknown to our national historians, yet his will is published by Lye (Dic. App. No. 5), in which he repeatedly calls Ethelred his father, Elfrida his grandmother, and Edmund and Edwy his brothers. It has been supposed that the author of the will was slain by the Danes in 1010: but the Athelstan, who fell on that occasion, was not the king's son. He was his "athum" or daughter's husband. Chron. Sax. 139.

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tude. At this moment Edric cut off the head of Osmear, who had been slain, and holding it in his hand exclaimed, "The head of Edmund!" At the sight, some of the English turned their backs. The indignant prince hurled his spear at the traitor; and, hastening to an eminence, uncovered his face, that he might be known to his troops. The battle was thus restored, and was a second time interrupted by the darkness of the night *.

In this murderous conflict each army had suffered severely; but the morning showed that the result was in favour of the English. Canute was already on his march to London. Edmund, as soon as he had repaired his losses, followed the footsteps of the Dane, forced him to raise the siege, and fought a second battle at Brentford. The advantage seems to have been with the enemy, who again returned to the capital, but failing in the assault, pillaged the neighbouring country. The indefatigable Edmund overtook the plunderers at Oxford, where they experienced a most signal overthrow. It is pretended that the English monarch might have annihilated the Danes, had it not been for the perfidious counsels of Edric, who was again restored to favour †. Canute sailed to the isle of Sheppey. To a personal challenge from the English hero, he coolly replied: "Let the man who "talks of fighting in winter, take care to be prepared in "summer ‡."

Within a few days the Northmen had quitted the isle of Sheppey, and landed on the opposite coast of Essex. Edmund met them at Assington. The Danes brought into the field the mysterious standard of their fathers; and Thurchil, from the apparent flight of the raven, promised them certain victory §. Edmund had drawn up

* Chron. Sax. 148, 149. Flor. 618. Kuytlinga Saga, p. 130.

† Chron. Sax. 149. Flor. 618.

‡ Qui aves duellum in hieme, cave ne deficias aptiore tempore. Encom. Emm. 16.

§ Ibid. Encom. Emm. 16. Camden has fixed on Ashdown, Gibson prefers Assington, for the scene of this battle. I follow the latter. Not only does the name bear a greater resemblance to 'Assandun,' but the barrows near Ashdown, which have been opened lately, show by their contents

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his forces in three divisions: but at the very onset, Edric, either actuated by treachery or cowardice, fled with his division. From three in the afternoon till sunset, despair supported the natives: some of them even maintained the contest by the light of the moon; but at last they fled in every direction, and attempted by their knowledge of the country to elude the pursuit of the enemy. This defeat was most fatal to the prospects of Edmund. Almost the whole of the West-Saxon nobility perished. The Danes buried their own dead; they stripped the bodies of the English, and left them naked on the field *.

Canute followed his competitor into Gloucestershire, and another battle would have ensued, had not the chieftains in each army been tired of this sanguinary warfare. Compelled by the expostulations of their troops, the two kings met in the isle of Olney, exchanged oaths and presents, and agreed to a compromise. Mercia and Northumbria were the portion of Canute: the remainder with the royal supremacy was retained by Edmund: but the tax called Danegeld was extended to both kingdoms, and assigned to defray the expenses of the Danish fleet. Edmund died within a month after the pacification, and was buried near the remains of his grandfather at Glastonbury. He left two infant sons, Edward and Edmund †.

The reign of this king, if reign it can be called, which was a mere struggle for existence, lasted but seven months. Yet within that short space, besides having vigorously assisted in the defence of London, he fought

that they are not, as was supposed, of Saxon or Danish, but of Roman construction. See two very interesting letters by J. Gage, esq., in Archæol. vol. xxv. xxvi.

* Ibid. 17, 18. Chron. Sax. 150. Malm. 40. Flor. 618. In this battle fell the ealdormen Ælfric, Godwin, Ulfketel, and Ethelward. Eadnoth, bishop of Dorchester, with Wulsige the abbot of Ramsey, was slain as he was saying mass for the success of the army. Hist. Elien. 502. Juxta morem Anglorum veterem non armis sed oraculum suppetiis pugnantem exercitum juvaturi. Hist. Ram. 434.

† Chron. Sax. 150. Encom. Emmæ, 18, 19, 20. Walling. 549. Florence (618). and Westminster (205), give to Edmund, London, Essex, and East-Anglia.

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five battles; and, till the fatal field of Assington, seemed destined to re-establish the independence of his country. From his armour or his strength he acquired the surname of "Ironside:" and his memory was long cherished by the gratitude and admiration of his subjects. Their vanity has thrown the embellishments of fiction over the character of the hero. To account for the final success of Canute it was said that the two kings fought in single combat in the isle of Olney; that the Dane, finding himself inferior, assailed his rival with flattery; and that by his eloquence, not his prowess, he induced the English prince to acquiesce in the partition of the kingdom *. Nor was Edmund permitted to die in the ordinary course of nature. By some writers his death was attributed to Canute, on whom it conferred the crown of Wessex: by others to Edric, as if the murder of a king had been wanting to fill up the measure of his treasons. The assassins were said to have been the two chamberlains of Edmund, or Edric, or the son of Edric. Some professed themselves ignorant of the circumstances; some asserted that he was stabbed in the back in a secret and unguarded moment †. But the real fact is uncertain. The Saxon Chronicle is content with saying, that he departed on the feast of St. Andrew; the encomiast of Emma, that he died by the visitation of God ‡.

* Riev. 364. West. 205. Hunt. 208.
† Ingulf. 57. Hunt. 208. West. 205. Hist. Ram. 434. Malm. 40. Saxo 193. Hist. Elien. 502.
‡ Chron. Sax. 150. Deus Edmundum eduxit e corycre. Encom. Emm. 20. Hominem exuit. Walling. 549 Ambiguum quo casu extinctus. Malm. 40.

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CHAPTER VI.

DANES.

Danish Sovereigns—Canute—Harold—Hardecanute—Saxon line restored, —Edward the Confessor—Harold—Victory of William the Conqueror.

CANUTE.

AFTER the death of Edmund, Canute was elected king by the unanimous voice of the nation. To justify their choice it was pretended by some, that according to the pacification of Olney, the crown belonged to him as the survivor; by others that Edmund had appointed him the guardian and protector of his children *. The best reason was the power of the Dane. No man had the wish or the hardihood to renew the bloody and unavailing contest. A. D. 1016.

The first object of Canute's policy was to secure himself on the throne. From the infancy of Edmund's children he had little to apprehend; but, as they advanced in years, they might prove dangerous competitors. Though a sea-king was seldom diverted from his purpose by considerations of humanity, Canute did not imbrue his hands in their blood, but sent them to his half-brother Olave, king of Sweden. If we may believe those, who could hardly possess the means of knowing it, the messenger who conducted the children, was instructed to request in secret of Olave, that he would order them

* He was chosen sponte (Encom. Emm. p. 20), omnium consensu (Ing. 58), ex prædicta concordiæ condictione (Walling. 549), quia Edmundus voluerat Canutum adjutorem et protectorem esse filiorum ejus, donec regnandi ætatem habuissent. Flor. 618.

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to be murdered. But whatever credit may be given to that report, it is certain that they were conveyed from Sweden to the court of Stephen, king of Hungary*. That prince, who was afterwards sainted for his virtues, received the orphans with tenderness, and educated them as his own children. Edmund died in his youth: Edward married Agatha, daughter to the emperor of Germany, and will hereafter claim the reader's attention.

Besides the children, Canute had to guard against the brothers of Edmund. Edwy was in England, and, for reasons with which we are unacquainted, was named the "king of the peasants." He was banished, recalled, and assassinated in the bosom of his family. We are told that the king had endeavoured to induce Ethelwold, a powerful thane, to undertake the murder; and that, failing in the attempt, he bribed some of Edwy's own servants†.

Edward and Alfred, the half-brothers of Edmund, were in Normandy, and Wallingford assures us that their uncle Richard had fitted out a fleet in support of their claims‡. But Canute had the wisdom to disarm his enmity, by asking in marriage his sister, the relict of Ethelred. To accept the hand of the man, whose hostility had almost deprived her late husband of his kingdom, who was suspected of the murder of her sons-in-law, and who had despoiled her own children of the crown, does not indicate much delicacy in Emma: but her youth and vanity were flattered with the prospect of royalty; her brother reluctantly assented to the proposal; and the marriage was solemnly celebrated in the month of July, 1017. It had been previously agreed, that her issue by Canute should succeed to the crown of England;

* Mailros, 155. Flor. 619. Higden, 275. Our chroniclers say that they were sent to Solomon king of Hungary. But Papebroche shows it must have been to Stephen, not to Solomon, who was not born till after the year 1051. Act. SS. Jan. ii. 325.

† Chron. Sax. 151. Flor. 619. Mailros, 155. The Saxon chronicle mentions two Edwys banished at the same time: but they appear to be one person, from Simeon (175). Higden (274). Brompton (907). Knyghton (2317).

‡ Walling. 550.

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a condition, which, while it satisfied the Norman, extinguished the hopes of his Anglo-Saxon nephews *.

Canute had divided the kingdom into four governments. Wessex he retained for himself; East-Anglia he gave to Thurchil; and continued Eric and Edric in Northumberland, and Mercia †. But Edric soon received the reward of his former perfidy. The king was celebrating the festival of Christmas in London, and Edric had the imprudence to boast of his services. Canute, turning to Eric, exclaimed: "Then let him re-" ceive his deserts, that he may not betray us, as he betray-" ed Ethelred and Edmund." The Norwegian cut him down with his battle-axe; and the body was thrown from a window into the Thames. It has been said that Canute, though willing to derive advantage from the treason, was anxious to punish the traitor: but, as he ordered the Norman and the principal retainers of Edric to be put to death at the same time, there is reason to believe that they were suspected of some plot against the Danish interest. Their punishment is a matter of triumph to the ancient annalists, who attribute to the perfidy of Edric the subjugation of their country: but the same writers lament the fate of Ethelwerd and Brihtric, who perished with them, and were numbered among the most noble and blameless of the English nobility ‡. The lands of the slain were distributed among the Danish chieftains; but several of these, aware of the hatred of the natives, and apprehensive for their lives, with the king's permission sold their estates, and returned with the money to their native country §.

These emigrations to Denmark were much encouraged

* Chron. Sax. 151. Encom. Emm. 21. Malm. 40, 41.

† Thurchil was expelled in 1021. Chron. Sax. 152. See a long account of this celebrated Dane in Langbeck, ii. 458. Eric met with the same fate as Thurchil. West. 207. Malm. 41.

‡ Encom. Emmæ, 20. Malm. 41. Edric is said to have been killed digno fine (Ing. 58) swythe rihtlice (Chron. Sax. 152), but the others sine culpa (Mail. 955. Flor. 619).

§ Hist. Ram. 438. 443. 445.

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by Canute, who, now that he thought himself secure on the throne, made it his endeavour to win the affections of his English subjects. The presence of the Danish army was to them a constant source of uneasiness and animosity: but gratitude as well as policy forbade him to dismiss it without a liberal donative. For this purpose the sum of fifteen thousand pounds was raised on the citizens of London, of seventy-two thousand on the remainder of the nation: an oppressive burthen, but which
A. D. 1018. was borne with the greater cheerfulness, when its real object was understood. Of all the associates of his labours and conquests he retained only the crews of forty ships, about three thousand men, probably the Thingmanna or royal guard, which, we are told, amounted to that number *. These were a body of soldiers selected by Canute from the whole of his forces. He was their commander: the chiefs swore fealty to him; and the privates to their chiefs. The laws are still extant, which he compiled for their use; and his chief object appears to have been to prevent the quarrels, and consequently the bloodshed, which so frequently happened among these turbulent warriors. Unfortunately the king himself was the first to transgress his own laws, by the murder of a soldier in a paroxysm of passion. He assembled the Thingmans, descended from his throne, acknowledged his crime, and demanded punishment. They were silent. He promised impunity to every individual, who should speak his sentiments. They left the decision to his own wisdom. He

* Chron. Sax. 151. Flor. 649. Sim. Dunel. 177. These all differ in the sum paid by the citizens of London, making it 10,500, 11,000, or 15,000 pounds. We are told in the laws of Edward the confessor, that to provide for the safety of the Danes who remained, it was agreed that they should all enjoy the king's peace; that if a Dane were murdered, the reputed murderer, unless he could clear himself by the ordeal, should be given up to justice: that if he could not be immediately found, the inhabitants of the vill or hundred, where the murder was perpetrated, should have a month and a day to search for him: that if they did not discover him, they should then pay a fine of 46 marks: that if they surrendered him to the king within a year and a day, the money should be returned: but if they did not forty marks of the fine should be kept by the king, and the other six be given to the parents or the lord of the slain. Leg. Sax. 199, 200.

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then adjudged himself to pay three hundred and sixty talents of gold, nine times the amount of the usual pecuniary mulct: and added nine other talents by way of farther compensation *.

Though Canute had been baptized in his infancy, he knew little of the doctrines of Christianity. But after he was seated on the English throne, the ferocity of his disposition was softened by the precepts of religion, and the sanguinary sea-king was insensibly moulded into a just and beneficent monarch. He often lamented the bloodshed and misery which his own rapacity and that of his father had inflicted on the natives; and acknowledged it his duty to compensate their sufferings by a peaceful and equitable reign †. He always treated them with marked attention; protected them from the insolence of his Danish favourites; placed the two nations on a footing of equality; and admitted them alike to offices of trust and emolument. He erected a magnificent church at Assington, the scene of his last victory; and repaired the ruins of the religious edifices, which had suffered during the invasion. By his donations the abbey of St. Edmund's, the memorial of the cruelty of his fathers, was rendered for centuries the most opulent of the monastic establishments in the kingdom. In a witena-gemot at Oxford he confirmed the laws of Edgar, and persuaded the English and Danish thanes to forgive each other every former cause of offence, and to promise mutual friendship for the future ‡. In another at Winchester a code of laws was compiled from the enactments of former kings, with such additions as were required by the existing state of society. From it some interesting particulars may be selected. I. The king exhorted all those who were intrusted with the administration of

* Langbeck, 111. 144. et seq. Saxo. 199. The Thingmanna were also called Thingliths, and Huscarles, that is, thane-men, sea-thanes, and domestics.

† See his charter in Ingulf. 58.

‡ Ing. ibid. Hist. Rames. 437. Encom. Emm. 23. Chron. Sax. 151. Mail. 155.

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justice, to be vigilant in the punishment of crimes, but sparing of human life; to treat the penitent with less, the impenitent culprit with greater severity; and to consider the weak and indigent as worthy of pity, the wealthy and powerful as deserving the full rigour of the law; because the former were often driven to the commission of guilt by two causes, which seldom affected the latter, oppression and want. II. He severely reprobated and prohibited the custom of sending Christians for sale into foreign countries. But the reason which he assigned, was not that there is any thing immoral in the institution of slavery; but that such Christians were in danger of falling into the hands of infidel masters, and of being seduced from their religion. III. By the incorporation of the Danes with the natives, the rites of paganism had again made their appearance in the island. Canute forbade the worship of the heathen gods, of the sun or moon, of fire or water, of stones or fountains, and of forests or trees. At the same time he denounced punishment against those who pretended to deal in witchcraft, and the "workers of death," whether it were by lots, or by flame, or by any other charms. IV. The existing system of jurisprudence which he confirmed, was divided into three branches, the law of the West-Saxons, the law of the Mercians, and the law of the Danes. The two former had been preserved from the time of the Heptarchy, and prevailed in their respective districts: the latter had been introduced into East-Anglia and Northumbria by the Danes, who had settled in those countries since the beginning of the ninth century. Of all three the substance was the same; they differed only in the amount of the pecuniary mulcts which were imposed on various transgressions. V. The king undertook to ease his people of part of the burthens arising from the feudal services, which in England, as well as the other European nations, had long been on the increase. He totally abolished the custom of purveyance, forbidding his officers to extort provisions for his use, and commanding his bailiffs to

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supply his table from the produce of his own farms. He fixed at a moderate value the heriots which were paid at the demise of tenants, and apportioned them to the rank of the deceased, whether they died intestate or not. With respect to heiresses, whose helpless condition frequently exposed them to the tyranny of their lords, he enacted, that neither maid nor widow should be compelled to marry against her will. In conclusion, he commanded these laws to be observed both by the Danes and the English, under the penalty of a single *were* for the first offence, of a double *were* for the second, and of the forfeiture of all property for the third *.

Though Canute generally resided in England, he frequently visited Denmark. He was accompanied by an English fleet: and carried with him pious and learned missionaries to civilize and instruct his countrymen. Of these, Bernard, Gerbrand, and Rainer were promoted to the episcopal dignity, and placed by him in Sconen, Zealand, and Fionia. In one of his visits, in 1025, he was suddenly attacked by Olave and Ulfr with a numerous army of Swedes, and was defeated with the loss of many English and Danish thanes. But our annalists add, that Godwin, who commanded the English troops, surprised the camp of the enemy during the night, and totally dispersed the Swedes. This service procured him the esteem and favour of his sovereign †.

In 1026 Canute made a pilgrimage to Rome. On his road he visited the most celebrated churches, leaving everywhere proofs of his devotion and liberality.‡ In his return he proceeded immediately to Denmark, but despatched the abbot of Tavistock to England with a letter, describing the object and the issue of his journey. This letter I shall transcribe, not only because it fur-

* Leg. 133—135. 143—146. Brompton, 914—931.
† Adam Brem ii. 38. Chron. Sax. 153. West. 207.
‡ So profuse was he in his donations that, according to a foreign chronicler, all who lived on the road by which he passed, had reason to exclaim: Benedictio Domini super regem Anglorum Cnutonem. Chron. Wil. Godel. apud Bouquet, x. 262.

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nishes an interesting specimen of the manners and opinions of the age, but also because it exhibits the surprising change which religion had produced in the mind of a ferocious and sanguinary warrior.

A. D. 1027. "Canute, king of all Denmark, England and Norway, and of part of Sweden, to Egelnoth the metropolitan, to archbishop Alfric, to all the bishops and chiefs, and to all the nation of the English, both nobles and commoners greeting. I write to inform you that I have lately been at Rome, to pray for the remission of my sins, and for the safety of my kingdoms, and of the nations that are subject to my sceptre. It is long since I bound myself by vow to make this pilgrimage; but I had been hitherto prevented by affairs of state, and other impediments. Now, however, I return humble thanks to the Almighty God, that he has allowed me to visit the tombs of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and every holy place within and without the city of Rome, and to honour and venerate them in person. And this I have done, because I had learned from my teachers, that the apostle St. Peter received from the Lord the great power of binding and loosing, with the keys of the kingdom of heaven. On this account I thought it highly useful to solicit his patronage with God.

"Be it moreover known to you, that there was at the festival of Easter a great assemblage of noble personages with the lord, and the pope John, and the emperor Conrad, namely, all the chiefs of the nations from mount Gargano, to the nearest sea, who all received me honourably, and made me valuable presents; but particularly the emperor, who gave me many gold and silver vases, with rich mantles and garments. I therefore took the opportunity to treat with the pope, the emperor, and the princes, on the grievances of my people, both English and Danes; that they might enjoy more equal law, and more secure safeguard in their way to Rome, nor be detained at so many barriers, nor harassed by unjust exactions. My demands were granted both by the em-

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peror, and by king Rodulf, to whom the greater part of the barriers belong; and it was enacted by all the princes, that my *men*, whether pilgrims or merchants, should for the future go to Rome and return in full security, without detention at the barriers, or the payment of unlawful tolls.

"I next complained to the pope, and expressed my displeasure that such immense sums were extorted from my archbishops, when according to custom they visited the apostolic see to obtain the pallium. A decree was made that this grievance should cease. Whatever I demanded, for the benefit of my people, either of the pope, or the emperor, or the princes, through whose dominions lies the road to Rome, was granted willingly, and confirmed by their oaths, in the presence of four archbishops, twenty bishops, and a multitude of dukes and nobles. Wherefore I return sincere thanks to God that I have successfully performed whatever I had intended, and have fully satisfied all my wishes.

"Now, therefore, be it known to you all, that I have dedicated my life to the service of God, to govern my kingdoms with equity, and to observe justice in all things. If by the violence or negligence of youth I have violated justice heretofore, it is my intention, by the help of God, to make full compensation. Therefore I beg and command those to whom I have confided the government, as they wish to preserve my friendship, or save their own souls, to do no injustice either to rich or poor. Let all persons, whether noble or ignoble, obtain their rights according to law, from which no deviation shall be allowed, either from fear of me, or through favour to the powerful, or for the purpose of supplying my treasury. I have no need of money raised by injustice.

"I am now on my road to Denmark, for the purpose of concluding peace with those nations, who, had it been in their power, would have deprived us both of our crown and our life. But God has destroyed their means, and will, I trust, of his goodness, preserve us, and humble

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all our enemies. When I shall have concluded peace with the neighbouring nations, and settled the concerns of my eastern dominions, it is my intention to return to England, as soon as the fine weather will permit me to sail. But I have sent you this letter beforehand; that all the people of my kingdom may rejoice at my prosperity. For you all know that I never spared nor will spare myself, or my labour, when my object is the advantage of my subjects.

"Lastly, I entreat all my bishops, and all the sheriffs, by the fidelity which they owe to me and to God, that the church-dues according to the ancient laws may be paid before my return; namely, the plough alms, the tithes of cattle of the present year, the Peter-pence, the tithes of fruit in the middle of August, and the kirk-shot at the feast of St. Martin, to the parish church. Should this be omitted, at my return I will punish the offender by exacting the whole fine appointed by law. Fare ye well."*

The power of Canute released the kingdom from the horrors of domestic war: but his ambition thirsted for a crown which had formerly been worn by his father. Sweyn had divided Norway between two brothers, Eric and Haco. When Eric accepted Northumberland from Canute, Haco succeeded to the whole, but was driven from it by the superior power of Olave, a Norwegian sea-king. Canute seduced the natives from their allegiance to Olave by presents, sailed to Norway with an English fleet of fifty vessels; and was everywhere received with acclamations of joy, and professions of attachment. He
A. D. 1028. expelled Olave and restored Haco. But the latter was soon afterwards drowned at sea: and Olave recovered his dominions. That prince was a zealous Christian; but his religious innovations irritated the jealousy of the pagan priests; and he was murdered in an insurrection of his subjects.†

* Spelm. Conc. 537. Ing. 59. Flor. 620. Malm. 41.
† Chron. Sax. 158. Flor. 620. Snorro, 278.

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Canute's last military effort was directed against Scotland. Fordun tells us, that Duncan, who, as nephew and heir to Malcolm, was in possession of Cumberland, refused to hold it of Canute, because that prince had not obtained the crown by hereditary descent; but that, before the armies could engage, the two kings were reconciled, and the ancient conditions respecting the possession of Cumberland, were solemnly renewed. Of these particulars our annalists are ignorant; and merely inform us, that Malcolm, unable to oppose the superior power of the English monarch, submitted to his pleasure with two inferior princes, Melbeth and Jermac.* A. D. 1033.

The courtiers of Canute, to please his vanity, were accustomed to extol him as the greatest of kings, whose will was obeyed by six powerful nations, the English, Scots, and Welsh, the Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians. Canute either had the good sense to despise, or affected to despise, their flattery. On one of these occasions, as he was sitting on the shore near Southampton, he commanded the sea to respect its sovereign. But the influx of the tide soon compelled him to retire, and he improved the opportunity to read his flatterers a lecture on the weakness of earthly kings, when compared with the power of that Supreme Being who rules the elements. Impressed with this idea, he is said, on his return to Winchester, to have taken the crown from his head, to have placed it on the great crucifix in the cathedral, and never more to have worn it even at public ceremonies.†

Canute lived several years after his pilgrimage to Rome. He died at Shaftesbury in 1035, and was buried at Winchester. By his queen Emma he had two children, a son, whom from his own name he called Hardecanute, or Canute the Hardy, and a daughter Gunihlda, who was married to Henry, the son of Conrad, and emperor of Germany. Besides these children, Alfgive, the A. D. 1035.

* Fordun, iv. 41. Chron. Sax. 153. Hunt. 208. West. 209.
† Hunt. 209. West. 209.

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daughter of Alfhelm, earl of Northampton, had borne him, previously to his marriage, two sons, Sweyn and Harold. Their illegitimacy in the opinion of the age, was no great disgrace; and the violence of party endeavoured to obstruct their advancement, by describing them as supposititious. But that they were acknowledged by their father, is evident. To the elder, Sweyn, was given the crown of Norway, after the assassination of Olave; Harold, by his promptitude and the favour of the soldiery, ascended the throne of England on the demise of Canute *.

HAROLD, SURNAMED HAREFOOT.

By the marriage settlement between Canute and Emma, and by a more recent declaration of the king, the crown ought to have devolved on Hardecanute. But that prince had been previously sent to take possession of Denmark, and his absence encouraged the ambition of his illegitimate brother, Harold, whose interests were warmly espoused by the Thingmanna at London †, the Danes in general, and the northern English. The wishes of the southern counties were divided between Hardecanute and one of the two sons of Ethelred, who still resided in
A. D. 1036. Normandy. The country appeared on the eve of a civil war; and many, to escape the impending tempest, had sought an asylum in the morasses and forests; when a compromise was effected in a witena-gemot at Oxford. To Harold were allotted London and the northern division of the kingdom: the counties on the right bank of the Thames were appropriated to Hardecanute, and during his absence were committed to the government of his mother Emma, and the ealdorman Godwin ‡.

As soon as the news of the death of Canute had

* Chron. Sax. 155. Ing. 61. Flor. 622. West. 206. The last writer describes Alfgiva as married to Canute.

† The Saxon Chronicle calls them the *lithsmen* at London, and as the Thingmanna were also called Thing*liths*, I have no doubt they were the same persons.

‡ Chron. Sax. 154. 155. Ingul. 61. Encom. Emm. 25, 26.

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reached Normandy, Edward, the eldest of the surviving sons of Ethelred, and afterwards king of England, collected a fleet of forty ships, crossed the channel, and landed at Southampton. If he relied on the co-operation of his mother, he was deceived. Emma was more attached to her children by Canute than to those by Ethelred; and was actually making every exertion to preserve the crown for Hardecanute. Though Edward landed within a few miles of her residence, and in the midst of her retainers, he found himself in a hostile country: a formidable force, which was hourly increasing, menaced him with destruction; and the prince and his followers having plundered a few villages, retired to their ships, and returned to Normandy. The result of this expedition seems not to have been forgotten: and Emma, at a later period, was punished for her disaffection by the neglect of her son, and the forfeiture of her treasures *.

We are not told what were the reasons which determined Hardecanute to trifle away his time in Denmark. Harold profited by the delay; and by threats, and promises, and presents, continued to extend his authority. But what chiefly contributed to fix him on the throne was a bloody and mysterious occurrence, of which at the present day it is difficult to discover either the origin or the motive. A letter was conveyed to Edward and his brother Alfred in Normandy. It purported to be written by their mother, upbraiding them with their apathy, describing the growing ascendancy of Harold, and urging one of them to cross the sea, and to assert his right to the crown. By the historian, who has preserved this letter, it is pronounced a forgery, contrived by Harold to decoy one of the two princes into his hands †. But it will require no small share of credulity to believe this story. Why should he invite only one, and not both of the brothers? By removing both out of his way he would A. D. 1037

* Gul. Pict. 37, 38. edit. Maseres. Will. Gemet. 271. Leg. Sax. 210.
† Encom. Emm. 28.

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secure himself against the claimants, to whom the eyes of the natives were principally directed: but the benefit which might be derived from the murder of one would be more than balanced by the infamy which would result from so detestable a crime. However this may be, it is certain that Alfred, the younger, accepted the invitation, raised a small body of troops in Normandy, repaired to the court of Baldwin, earl of Flanders, and by the addition of a few adventurers from Boulogne, swelled the number of his followers to six hundred men. At Sandwich he found a strong force prepared to oppose him; and changing his course, steered round the north Foreland, till he came opposite to the city of Canterbury, where he landed without discovering an enemy. Within a few hours he was met by Godwin, who plighted to him his faith, and undertook to conduct him to Emma. Leaving London on the right, because it belonged to Harold, they proceeded to Guildford, where the earl quartered Alfred and his men in small bodies among the inhabitants, supplied them plentifully with provisions, and having promised to wait on the prince in the morning, retired to his own residence. In the midst of the night, the satellites of Harold arrived, surprised the strangers in their beds, and reserved them for the butchery of the following day. With their hands bound behind them they were ranged in a line; every tenth man out of the six hundred received his liberty; and of the rest a few were selected for slavery. The scene which followed can hardly be paralleled in the annals of American ferocity. The remaining victims were maimed, or blinded, or hamstrung, or scalped, or embowelled, according to the caprice or barbarity of their tormentors. "Never," says one of the chroniclers, "was "a more bloody deed done in this land since the arrival "of the Danes." The prince himself was hurried away to Harold in London, and thence to the isle of Ely, under the charge of a thane, whose threats and insults aggravated the horrors of his situation. Seated on a sorry

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horse, stripped of his clothes, and with his feet tied beneath the saddle, the son of Ethelred was exposed in each town and village to the derision, perhaps to the commiseration, of the beholders. At Ely he was arraigned before a court of miscreants, and adjudged to lose his eyes. The sentence was executed by main force; and the unfortunate prince, after lingering a few days, expired, either through the violence of his sufferings, or by the dagger of an assassin *.

Of the truth of this melancholy tale there is no reason to doubt. It has been transmitted to us by a contemporary writer, who received his information from the survivors of the massacre; and his narrative is fully confirmed by the testimony of succeeding historians. Yet it is difficult to believe, that such unnecessary cruelty, so wanton a waste of human blood, could have been, as is pretended, a mere act of precaution on the part of Harold. It wears more the appearance of a deed, stimulated by the thirst of revenge, or prompted by the hope of inspiring terror. Perhaps Alfred, by his previous cruelty, had sharpened the resentment of his enemies; undoubtedly he had come for the purpose of driving Harold from the throne †, and probably at the invitation of Emma; for that princess immediately prepared to quit the country, and accepted the offer of an asylum at Bruges from Baldwin of Flanders, who had patronized the attempt of the unfortunate Alfred ‡.

Her flight left Harold without an opponent: the thanes of Wessex withdrew their allegiance from his half-brother; and he was unanimously chosen king of

* Gul. Pict. 39. Encom. Emm. 29—31. This historian wrote within three years after the massacre. His testimony will overbalance the doubts of Malmsbury (43). Malmsbury (ibid.) supposes the murder of Alfred to have taken place after the death of Harold: Huntingdon after that of Hardecanute. But the monk of St. Omer affixes it to the reign of Harold, and the chronicles of Mailros (156), of Florence (623), of Westminster (210), to the year 1036.—Higden thus describes the punishment of embowelling. Primordia viscerum fecit ad palos erectos figi, et tunc corpora circumduci, donec novissima intestinorum extraherentur. Hig. 227.

† Sceptrum et ipse paternum requirebat. Gul. Pict. 39. Ut paternum regnum obtineret. West. 219.

‡ Encom. Emm. 39.

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England. But when he called on Egelnoth, the archbishop of Canterbury, to perform the ceremony of his coronation, that prelate placing the insignia of royalty on the altar, boldly replied; "There are the crown and "sceptre, which Canute intrusted to my charge. To "you I neither give nor refuse them. You may take "them if you please; but I strictly forbid any of my "brother bishops to usurp an office, which is the prero-"gative of my see." Of Harold's behaviour on this extraordinary occurrence, we are ignorant: but he appears to have subsequently removed the primate's objections, and to have been crowned with the usual solemnities *.

A. D. 1040 No details of his government have been transmitted to posterity. One writer insinuates, that he was a benefactor to the church; another, hostile to his memory, asserts, that through hatred of Christianity, he absented himself from all the public offices of religion †. His principal amusement was the chase, in which he frequently hunted on foot, and from his fleetness acquired the surname of "harefoot." After a short reign of four years, he died in 1040, and was buried at Westminster.

HARDECANUTE.

Emma, after her arrival at Bruges, had endeavoured, by frequent messages, to inflame the ambition, and accelerate the preparations of her son Hardecanute. Two years, however, elapsed before she was able to direct his attention to his interests in England; and then, leaving a powerful armament in port, he sailed with nine ships to consult his mother. During his residence with her at Bruges, a messenger arrived with the welcome intelligence of the death of Harold; and he was followed by a deputation of English and Danish thanes, requesting Hardecanute to ascend the throne of his father. As soon

* Encom. Emm. 28, 29 He gave to the monastery of Croyland the mantle, which he wore at his coronation. Ingul. 61.
† Ing. ibid. Encom. Emm. 29.

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as his fleet had joined him from Denmark, he proceeded with sixty-two sail to England *. His authority was immediately acknowledged; but one of the first measures of his government excited universal discontent By Canute the Thingmanna had been reduced to the complement of sixteen ships; and the pay of these Danish guards had been long defrayed by the nation at the annual rate of eight marks for each private, and of twelve marks for each officer. The addition of the new fleet had multiplied their number in a five-fold degree; and the tax which was imposed in consequence, experienced considerable opposition. At Worcester the collectors, Thurstan and Feader, were put to death in an insurrection of the populace. But a severe punishment followed the offence. During four days the county was given up to pillage, and on the fifth the city was reduced to ashes. The inhabitants had fled to an island in the Severn, where they defended themselves till they appeased the vengeance, and obtained the pardon, of the king †.

Hardecanute could not forget the injuries of Harold to himself and to his relatives, the usurpation of the crown, the exile of Emma, and the murder of Alfred; and his feelings urged him to an act of impotent revenge, the folly of which was equal to its barbarity. As if he could make the dead to feel, he ordered the tomb of his predecessor to be opened, the body to be decapitated, and the head and trunk to be thrown into the Thames. Both were recovered by some fishermen, who deposited them in the cemetery of St. Clement's, the usual burying-place of the Danes ‡.

The care of this posthumous execution had been delegated to Alfric, archbishop of York, and Godwin, earl of Wessex. But the commissioners disagreed, and the prelate accused the earl of the murder of Alfred. Godwin denied the charge, and cleared himself, in the legal

* Encom. Emm. 34. † Chron. Sax. 155, 156. Flor. 623, 635. Malm. 42.
‡ Flor. 623. West. 211. Mailros, 156.

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manner, by his own oath, and the oaths of a jury of his peers, the principal noblemen in England*. It cannot be ascertained whether this acquittal removed the suspicions of Hardecanute: but the earl was restored to favour, and participated with Emma in the administration of the kingdom. He had made to the king a most magnificent present, a ship of the usual dimensions, of which the stern was covered with plates of gold. It carried eighty warriors, the retainers of Godwin. Their lances, helmets, and coats of mail were gilt; their battle-axes glistened with decorations of gold and silver; the hilts of their swords, the nails and bosses of their shields, were of gold; and they wore round each arm two golden bracelets of the weight of sixteen ounces†. This account will not excite surprise in the reader, who recollects that the Northmen were accustomed to expend the plunder of nations in embellishing their arms and ships, objects of inestimable value in the eyes of the northern pirates‡.

Hardecanute is described as mild in his manners, and generous in his disposition. His table was copiously

* The guilt of Godwin will always remain a problem. It may be urged against him that Alfred at the time of the murder was under his protection, and in his town of Guilford; that within four years he was publicly accused of it by the archbishop of York; and that he is condemned without hesitation by almost every historian who wrote after the conquest. On the other hand it may be observed, 1st, that the monk of St. Omer, who was so well acquainted with the transaction, far from charging the earl, seems to represent him as perfectly ignorant of Alfred's danger: ad sua recessit hospitia, mane rediturus, ut domino suo serviret cum debita honorificentia.—Enc. Emm. 30. 2d, that the accusation of the archbishop is balanced by the acquittal of Godwin on his trial: 3d, that little reliance is to be placed on the assertion of writers posterior to the conquest; when every tale which could vilify the family of Godwin, was gratefully accepted, and eagerly countenanced by the reigning dynasty.——Edward the Confessor, in two of his charters, attributes the death of his brother to Harold, and (which is more singular) to Hardecanute. Now the latter prince was in Denmark, and the accusation, if it mean any thing, must allude to those who governed in the name of Hardecanute, and in that hypothesis may reach Emma, or Godwin, or both. The king's words are, "Haroldo et Hardecanuto, a quibus et alter meus frater Alfredus crudeliter est occisus."—Spel. Con. 628. 632. Yet, would Harold, who was then all-powerful, have subscribed to these charters, if they had cast so foul a stain on the memory of his father.

† Malm. 43. Mailros, 156. Flor. 623. West. 211.

‡ See Encom Emm. 8 13 Snorre, 338.

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supplied at four different hours in the day. This was no mean recommendation in the opinion of the chieftains, who set a high value on the pleasures of the table, and expected to eat and drink at the expense of the sovereign*. He sent for his half-brother Edward from Normandy, received him with the sincerest friendship, and gave him a princely establishment. His sister Gunihilda, the fairest woman of her time, he married to the emperor Henry. All the thanes, both English and Danish, attended her to the sea-shore, desirous of attracting the notice of the king, by the attention which they paid to the princess; and never before, say the chronicles, was seen in England so magnificent a display of gold, and silver, and gems, and of silken vests, and beautiful horses. The songs which were composed, on the occasion, continued to be sung by the people in their convivial meetings, and preserved the memory of Gunihilda through many succeeding generations†.

The character of the king was such as to afford the presage of a tranquil and prosperous reign. But his constitution was feeble, and his life had been frequently endangered by disease. In his second year he honoured with his presence the nuptials of a noble Dane at Lambeth. As he was standing in the midst of the company, and lifting the cup to his mouth, he suddenly fell to the ground, was carried speechless to his chamber, and in a short time expired. His body was laid near that of his father in the church of Winchester‡. 4th June, 1042.

Hardecanute left no issue. His death severed the connexion between the crowns of England and Denmark. Magnus, the son of Olave, who had driven Sweyn from Norway, now obtained possession of Denmark.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

Before the body of the departed king could be laid in the grave, his half-brother Edward had been called to the

* Hunt. 209. † Malm. 43. ‡ Ibid. Flor. 634.

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throne by the voice of the citizens of London. The rightful heir of the Saxon line was the son of Edmund Ironside, the exile in Hungary. But, in determining the succession, the English had frequently substituted the uncle for the nephew. Edward was present; his character and his misfortunes pleaded in his favour; the wishes of the natives loudly demanded a king of the race of Cerdic; and the murmurs of the Danes, if the Danes were inclined to murmur, were speedily silenced by the overwhelming influence of Godwin. It was not, however, before the following Easter, that the son of Ethelréd, having promised to preserve the laws of Canute, was crowned by archbishop Edsy, who embraced the opportunity of reading the new sovereign a long lecture on the regal duties, and the paternal government of his Saxon predecessors.*

8d Apr. 1043.

Edward was now about forty years of age, twenty-seven of which he had spent an exile in Normandy. Precluded by circumstances from every rational hope of obtaining the crown, he had solaced the hours of banishment with the pleasures of the chase, and the exercises of religion; and he brought with him to the throne those habits of moderation and tranquillity which he had acquired in a private station. He was a good, rather

* Knyghton, 2336. Chron. Sax. 157. Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1043, published at the end of Lye's Dictionary. I shall refer to it by that name, because it was copied by Lambard. By the Norman writers, Edward's accession is attributed to the exertions of William, duke of Normandy, then in his fifteenth year. We are told that he demanded the crown for Edward by his messengers, that he sent Edward from Normandy with a guard, and that he threatened to follow with a powerful army. The fear of an invasion made the choice of the English fall on Edward.—Guil. Pict. p. 44. edit. Maseres. I consider this as one of the fictions invented in Normandy to account for the appointment, real or pretended, of William by Edward to be his successor. That the English prince was at the very period in England, and not in Normandy, is evident not only from our English chroniclers, but from the monk of St. Omer, who, in the last lines addressed by him to Emma, praises the union in which she lives in England with her two sons Edward and Hardecanute (Encom. Emm. p. 36), and from William of Jumieges, who says that Hardecanute called Edward from Normandy, and that they lived afterwards together (Guil. Gem. vii.). It is remarkable that the first of these writers says Edward was sent for, that he might partake of the kingdom (ut veniens secum obtineret regnum, p. 36); the second, that Hardecanute left him heir to the kingdom (totius regni reliquit heredem. ibid.).

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than a great, king. To preserve peace, and promote religion, to enforce the ancient laws, and to diminish the burthens of his people, were the chief objects of his government: but he possessed not that energy of mind, nor that ferocity of disposition, which, perhaps, were necessary to command the respect, and to repress the violence, of the lawless nobles by whom he was surrounded.

At his accession he found three powerful chieftains near the throne, Godwin, Leofric, and Siward. They bore the title of earls: for the ascendency of the Danes had introduced Danish customs and Danish appellations. The *ealdormen* of the Saxons had been transformed into the *earl* of the Northmen: and the different earldoms were parcelled out as circumstances suggested, some being confined within narrow limits, while others were extended to several counties. As the delegates of the sovereign, the earls possessed considerable power. They levied forces, received fines, tried causes, and exercised the ordinary functions of royalty within their respective jurisdictions: but they were removable at the will of the king and the witan, and did not transmit their offices as inheritances to their children. The earldom of Siward extended from the Humber to the confines of Scotland; Leofric was called the earl of Leicester, but his government comprehended most of the northern counties of Mercia. Godwin ruled in Wessex, Sussex, and Kent: and his two sons, Sweyn and Harold, already possessed, or soon obtained, the former the earldom of Gloucester, Hereford, Somerset, Oxford, and Berks, the latter that of Essex, Middlesex, Huntingdon, East-Anglia, and Cambridgeshire. When united, these noblemen were more than a match for the king, whose chief security lay in their mutual jealousies and discordant interests.

It was fortunate for Edward, that in the commencement of his reign, these powerful chieftains overlooked every subject of private dissension in their common zeal for the royal service. By their aid the restoration of the

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crown to the Saxon line was peaceably effected; and the Danish families, whose fidelity was ambiguous, or whose former tyranny deserved punishment, were driven out of the kingdom. To the list of the sufferers must be added the queen-mother. Edward held a council at Gloucester: thence, accompanied by Godwin, Leofric, and Siward, he hastened to Winchester, seized her treasures, and swept away the cattle and corn from the lands which she possessed as her dower *. The reader will already have noticed several instances of this species of military execution: but why it was inflicted upon Emma we have no particular information. By her partiality to the Danes she had acquired the hatred of the natives. The riches, which she collected with assiduity, had always been at the command of her younger children, while her sons by Ethelred were suffered to feel the privations of poverty. To her opposition was owing, in all probability, the failure of Edward's descent after the death of Canute; and it was even whispered that she was not guiltless of the blood of Alfred †. Her antipathy to the king had discovered itself since his accession; and she had obstinately refused to grant him any pecuniary aid ‡. But whatever were the motives which prompted this act of severity towards her, the character of Edward, and the sanction of his council, will justify the belief that it had not been wantonly adopted. She was still permitted to retain her dower, and to reside at Winchester, where she died in 1052.

While Edward was employed in consolidating his power at home, a formidable competitor was rising in the north. Hardecanute, when he ruled in Denmark, had been frequently engaged in war with Magnus, the conqueror of Norway; till both princes, fatigued with the useless struggle, had consented to a peace, on the

* Chron. Sax. 157. Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1043.

† This is asserted by the monk of Winchester, who relates every fable. Ang. Sac. i. 292. But it appears to derive some support from the assertion of Edward, mentioned at the end of note, p. 274.

‡ Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1043.

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precarious, but not unusual condition, that the survivor should succeed to the dominions of his deceased adversary. At the death of Hardecanute, Magnus occupied Denmark. But this did not satisfy his ambition; he also demanded the English crown, on the plea that, since it had been worn by Hardecanute, it was included in the provisions of the treaty. To his messengers Edward returned a sensible and resolute answer: that he sat on the English throne as the descendant of the English monarchs; that he had been called to it by the free choice of the people; and that he would never abandon it but with his life. The Northman had threatened to support his pretensions with all the power of Denmark and Norway; and Edward, to oppose the danger, had collected a numerous fleet at Sandwich. But Magnus A. D. was detained at home to defend his own territories against 1046. the rival efforts of Sweyn, the son of Ulfr and Althritha, the sister of Canute. Sweyn was defeated, and his cause appeared desperate, when the unexpected death of Magnus raised him to the throne. Norway was immediately seized by Harold, the nephew of Olave: he engaged in hostilities with Sweyn; and both princes ineffectually solicited the aid of the king of England. Sweyn had formerly requested fifty ships to support him against Magnus: he now demanded the same number against Harold. Though his requests were supported by all the influence of Godwin, who had married his aunt Githa, the witenagemot on both occasions returned a peremptory refusal *.

From the failure of Godwin in these attempts, it would appear as if the other noblemen, alarmed at his increasing influence, had combined to oppose his designs, and undermine his power. For besides their former honours, his sons had acquired a distinguished place in Edward's affections †, and his daughter had been crowned queen of

* Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1046. 1048, 1049. Malm. 60. Mailros, 157 Snorre, 38.

† They were "thæs cynges dyrlingas." Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1052.

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England. By the chroniclers favourable to the Godwins, Editha has been panegyrized for her learning, piety and liberality. She was, in their language, the rose blooming in the midst of thorns. By others she has been painted in less amiable colours, and there are certain facts which seem to depose that she was as vindictive of spirit, and as reckless of blood, as any of her kindred. We are told that it was with the utmost reluctance that Edward consented to the marriage, declaring that she might enjoy the honours of a queen, but not the right of a wife, a declaration interpreted by some to mean that he had bound himself by a vow to a life of continency, but attributed by others to his rooted antipathy to Godwin and his family.*

A. D. 1044.

The power of the Godwins received its first shock from the ungovernable passions of Sweyn, the eldest of the five brothers. He had violated the person of Edgive, the abbess of Leominster, and the indignant piety of Edward drove him into banishment. The outlaw assumed the profession of a sea-king, and sought wealth and power by piratical depredations. Weary at last with wandering on the ocean, he returned to England, sent his submission to the king, and obtained a promise of pardon. But the execution of the promise was opposed by two unexpected adversaries, his brother Harold, and Beorn his cousin, who probably had been the principal gainers by his outlawry. Disappointment urged him to revenge, which he sought under the mask of friendship. At the request of the emperor Henry, Edward had collected a numerous fleet for the purpose of opposing Baldwin, earl of Flanders. This armament was divided into two squadrons, of which one lay at Sandwich under the immediate command of the king, the other at Pevensey under that of earl Godwin. Sweyn, concealing his real design, visited his father at Pevensey, where he was apparently recon-

* Chron. Sax. 157. Malm. i. p. 334. In one of his charters, Edward prays for peace for himself and his posterity, et posteris meis. Wilkins Con. i. 319. A prayer not very reconcilable with a vow of continency.

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ciled to Beorn, and prevailed on that thane to withdraw his opposition. Thence the two cousins proceeded together towards Sandwich, for the avowed purpose of soliciting the royal clemency in favour of the outlaw; but on the road Beorn was suddenly seized by a body of armed men, hurried on board a ship at Bosenham, and conveyed to Dartmouth, on the coast of Devon. The mariners of Sweyn, by the command of their master, murdered and buried their prisoner. His bones were afterwards discovered at a great depth in the ground, and re-interred near those of his uncle Canute at Winchester. The assassins sailed to Bruges, and found an asylum under the protection of Baldwin, earl of Flanders, who had made his peace with the emperor*.

After this aggravation of his guilt, it is strange that Sweyn should cherish the hope of forgiveness; and still more strange that he should ultimately obtain it. But time wore down the edge of Edward's resentment; and pity, or the recollection of former friendship, or the fear of alienating a powerful family, induced him, at the solicitation of the bishop of Worcester, to restore the outlaw to his honours and estates. In the same year that active and zealous pontiff, Leo IX., consecrated the great church at Rheims, and held a council the next day, in which were promulgated certain canons against simoniacal preferments in the church. Dudoc, bishop of Wells, Walfric, abbot of St. Augustine's, and Elfwine, abbot of Ramsey, were present with instructions to bring back accurate information of the "decrees which should be "passed for the welfare of Christendom." But Leo had summoned another and more general council, to meet in Rome on the following festival of Easter; and to this, Heriman, bishop of Sherborne, and Eldred, bishop of Worcester, were sent, both as representatives of the Anglo-Saxon prelacy, and as messengers from the king. As English bishops, they took part in the promulgation

* Chron. Sax. 160. Flor. 626.

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of canons against simony, and in the excommunication of Berengarius, on account of his new doctrines respecting the Eucharist;* as messengers they consulted the pope and council respecting a case which perplexed the royal conscience. Edward had vowed to visit the tombs of the apostles at Rome, like his predecessors, Ethelwulf and Canute; but the witan objected to his departure from England, as long as he had no heir to the crown. Leo, having consulted the council, absolved the king from his vow, but on the condition that the money which he had collected to defray the expense of his journey should be distributed among the poor, and that out of his yearly income he should found, or re-found, an abbey in honour of St. Peter. This commutation was accepted; the money was given in doles to the poor, and from that moment the tenth part of the receipts from the king's manors was faithfully set apart for the foundation of the abbey.†

In the beginning of the same year died Eadsy, the archbishop of Canterbury, who was succeeded by Robert of Jumieges, the king's favourite. Edward had been acquainted with him when he was a simple monk in Normandy, had brought him to England, made him one of his chaplains, and then preferred him to the see of London. Robert, immediately on his translation to Canterbury, set out on a journey to Rome, in compliance with the ancient practice. For, ever since the origin of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons, it had been required of every metropolitan that in token of his submission to the church of Rome, he should repair soon after his election

* It is sometimes pretended that the doctrine of the Anglo-Saxon church respecting the Eucharist was the same as that of Berengarius. But how is it possible to reconcile this with the fact, that the representatives of the Anglo-Saxon church anathematised Berengarius and his doctrine in the council? That the bishops Heriman and Aldred formed part of the council, is plain from Wilkins Conc. i. 316, the Saxon Chronicle, 161, and the catalogue of the bishops present, in Mansi p. 129. That Berengarius and his doctrine were condemned, is certain from Lanfranc, Bib. xi. 338.

† Wilk. i. 316—320

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to the holy city, and should solicit from the pope the grant of the pallium in confirmation of his archiepiscopal authority. It was customary for the pontiff on these occasions to inquire into the state of religion in England, and to give to the new metropolitan particular instructions for his conduct. From the known character of Leo, there can be no doubt that he would insist on the strict observance of the canons lately passed against simony; and Robert immediately on his return found occasion on which he deemed it his duty to enforce them. During his absence, Sparhavoc (Sparrow-hawk), abbot of Abingdon, had been appointed his successor in the see of London. Robert refused to consecrate him. Sparhavoc repaired again to Canterbury, with the royal mandate in his hand, and met with another refusal. To every petition and remonstrance the archbishop replied that he could not disobey the orders which he had received from the pope. The controversy lasted during several months, but Sparhavoc yielded at last, and was superseded by William, a foreigner also, and one of the royal chaplains.*

The two marriages of Emma, a Norman princess, with two kings of England, had given occasion to the settlement of some Norman families in England; and the subsequent accession of Edward to the throne had added to their number. He had been accompanied or followed by several foreign churchmen, whom he raised to high ecclesiastical dignities, and by several laymen, who appear to have held inferiour offices in the royal household. One of them he honoured with the title and office of earl, Radulf, the son of Drogo, count of Mantes; but then, if Radulf were a Frenchman on the father's side, he was an Anglo-Saxon by his mother Goda, the sister of Edward. On the death of Drogo, this lady had married Eustace, count of Boulogne, who, in 1050, came to England to

* Chron. Sax. p. 162.

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visit his brother-in-law. It chanced, however, that either in his way to the court or in his return from it, his followers quarrelled with the burghers of Dover, a town belonging to earl Godwin; both had recourse to arms, and several persons, natives as well as foreigners, were slain. This sanguinary affray has been attributed by different writers to accident, or the insolence of the strangers, or the inhospitality of the natives. Eustace, however, hastened to the king, to complain of the insult, whilst many of his followers obtained possession of, or admission into, the "Castle on the Cliff."* Edward, irritated by the representations of Eustace, ordered Godwin to chastise the insolence of his *men*. The earl disdained to obey: his two sons applauded the spirit of their father; and improved the present opportunity to direct the national animosity against the foreign favourites. Three armies from the three earldoms of Godwin, Sweyn, and Harold, directed their march towards Longtree in Gloucestershire, to punish, as it was pretended, the depredations committed on the lands of Harold, by the French garrison of a castle in

* Normannos et Bononienses qui castellum in Dorbernise clivo tenuerunt. Hov. ad ann. 1051. Flor. ad ann. 1051. The chronicle for Normans and Bolognese has Frencsrcan. [The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle thus describes the transaction, under the year 1048. "When Eustace was some mile or more on this side of Dover, then he put on his breast-plate, and so did all his companions, and went to Dover. When they came thither, then would they lodge themselves where they chose. Then came one of his men, and would abide in the house of a householder against his will, and wounded the householder, and slew him within his own dwelling; and they went up towards the town, and slew, as well within as without, more than twenty men. And the townsmen slew nineteen men on the other side, and wounded they knew not how many. And Eustace escaped with a few men, and went again to the king, and made known to him, in part, how they had fared. And the king became very wroth with the townsmen. And the king sent off Godwin the earl, — and bade him go into Kent in a hostile manner to Dover; for Eustace had made it appear to the king that it had been more the fault of the townsmen than his: but it was not so. And the earl would not consent to the inroad, because he was loath to injure his own people." — Amer. Edit.]

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Herefordshire*. But Edward, who lay at Gloucester, was not to be deceived by this flimsy pretext; he summoned to his aid Radulf, and Leofric, and Siward, and was soon in a condition to intimidate his opponents. The troops demanded to be led against the insurgent earls, and the best blood in England, says the chronicler, would have been shed, had not more temperate measures been suggested by the wisdom of Leofric, and adopted by the moderation of Edward. It was proposed to summon the witena-gemot, and to refer every subject of dispute to the decision of that assembly. To so equitable an offer Godwin dared not object; and hostages, as if the two parties were on a footing of equality, were mutually exchanged. At the appointed day, the autumnal equinox, Edward entered London at the head of the most powerful army that had been seen for many years: Godwin at the same time took possession of Southwark with a considerable number of followers. But the influence of the earl shrunk before the awe that was created by the majesty of the king, and the terror that was inspired by the superiority of his force. The insurgent army gradually melted away; and Sweyn, on the night before the day appointed for an inquiry into the death of Beorn, thought it prudent to flee. He was solemnly pronounced an outlaw: the thanes, who held of Godwin and Harold, were compelled to swear fealty to the king; and the two earls were ordered to clear themselves of the accusations against them by the oaths of twelve compurgators in the presence of the witan. As a previous condition they demanded hostages for their safety: but this demand was sternly refused; and they were allowed five days either to establish their innocence, or to quit the king-

* The Normans, who had followed Edward, built castles on their lands after the manner of their own country. Thus besides the castle at Hereford, we meet with Robert's castle, Pentecoste's castle, &c. Chron. Sax. 163. 167. Chron. Lamb. 1052. The foreigners who formed the garrisons are called indifferently Frencisc men, or Welise (foreign, perhaps, Gaulish) men. The latter term has caused some confusion on account of its similarity to the word "Welshmen."

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dom. Godwin, with his wife and three sons, Sweyn, Tostig, and Gurth, fled for protection to the earl of Flanders: Harold, and his brother Leofwin, hastened to Bristol, embarked on board a vessel belonging to Sweyn, and with difficulty reached Ireland*. The queen was involved in the common disgrace of her family. Her lands were seized by the king, and her person was intrusted to the custody of Edward's sister, the abbess of Wherwell. Some writers affirm that she was treated with great severity: but a contemporary historian assures us, that she was conducted with royal pomp to the monastery allotted for her residence, and informed that her confinement was only a measure of temporary precaution†.

At the very commencement of the insurrection, the foreign favourites had trembled for their safety; and by their advice Edward had solicited the assistance of William, duke of Normandy. Tranquillity was hardly restored, when that prince, with a powerful fleet, reached the coast of England. As his services were no longer wanted, he landed with a gallant train of knights, was kindly received by the king, visited several of the royal villas, and was dismissed with magnificent presents. Many have pretended, that the real object of this interview was the future succession of William to the crown of England: but Ingulf, who accompanied that prince on his return to Normandy, and was for several years his confidential secretary, assures us, that the idea of succeeding to the English throne had not yet presented itself to his mind‡.

While Godwin remained at Bruges, he did not abandon himself to despair, but spent the winter in arranging the means of revenge. A few days before Midsummer he

* Chron. Sax. 163, 164. Chron. Lamb, ad ann. 1052.

† The author of the life of Edward, quoted by Stow, p. 96. His authority is the greater, as he dedicated his work to Editha herself. Ibid.

‡ Ingulf, 65. Flor. 627. Hemmingford, 456. Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1052.

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put to sea with a small squadron; while a powerful armament at Sandwich, under the earls Radulf and Odda, watched his motions. The outlaw was unconscious of his danger: but he escaped in a storm, and precipitately returned to his former asylum. The royal commanders were dismissed for their negligence; and, while the council was debating on the appointment of their successors, the mariners (so loosely combined were the armaments of these times) returned to their respective homes. This dispersion of the fleet encouraged Godwin to renew his attempt: in the channel he was met by Harold from Ireland; with their united squadrons they pillaged the coast, swept away the ships from the different harbours, advanced up the Thames, and sailed through the southern arch of the bridge at London. The royal fleet of fifty sail was ranged on the opposite side of the river; and a powerful army lined the left bank. Godwin sent his submission to Edward, by whom it was sternly refused. But the king's reluctance was gradually subdued by the policy of Stigand, who insinuated that his troops were unwilling to shed the blood of their countrymen; and that it was folly to sacrifice the affections of his subjects to the interests of a few Normans. At length he extorted from the reluctant king a commission to negotiate with Godwin, and that instant the foreigners fled in despair. Robert, archbishop of Canterbury, and Ulf, bishop of Dorchester, mounting their horses, fought their way through their opponents, rode to Ness in Essex, and seizing a small and shattered bark, committed themselves to the mercy of the waves. The others dispersed in different directions; and by the connivance of Edward's friends escaped with their lives, though they were compelled to quit the kingdom. By their flight the principal obstacle to an accommodation was removed. Godwin received permission to visit the king. He laid the blame of the late dissensions on the Normans, attested in the most solemn manner the innocence of himself and his children, and surrendered as pledges for his

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loyalty his son Wulfnoth, and his nephew Haco. Edward received him kindly, but for greater security sent the hostages to be kept by William of Normandy. The foreign favourites were outlawed by decree of the great council: Godwin and Harold recovered their earldoms; and Editha was recalled from her prison to the throne *. *But to Sweyn Edward was inexorable. He had been guilty of a most inhuman and perfidious murder; and seeing himself abandoned by his family, he submitted to the discipline of the ecclesiastical canons. He walked, a barefoot pilgrim, from Flanders to Palestine; visited with tears of compunction the holy places; and finished his penance and his life in the province of Lycia †.

The services of the negotiator on this occasion were not forgotten by the Godwins. He had expelled archbishop Robert: he succeeded to the honours of that prelate. Without learning, without any of the virtues becoming his profession, Stigand, even under a religious monarch, arrived at the highest dignity in the English church. His only merit was an aptitude for intrigue, and the art of profiting by every occurrence. He had been originally noticed by Canute, and appointed one of the royal chaplains. By the intervention of friends and the aid of presents, he became bishop of Helmstan: from Helmstan he was successively removed to Selsey and Winchester; and now obtained the great object of his ambition, the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury. To his unspeakable mortification Pope Leo IX. could not be persuaded that a church was vacant, of which the bishop was still alive, and refused to surrender his rights ‡. But the vigilance of Stigand never slept: John of Velitræ, under the name of Benedict, usurped the papacy for a few months; and it was no difficult matter for one intruder to obtain the pallium from another. However, Benedict was soon expelled, and Alexander II. suspended

* Chron. Sax. 165—168. Flor. 627, 628. † Malm. 46.
‡ Robert had gone to Rome, and in his return with a papal letter, died at Jumieges, an abbey in Normandy. Malm. 46.

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Stigand from the exercise of the episcopal functions. Still, under the patronage of Harold, he contrived to deceive the simplicity of Edward; and his avarice absorbed at the same time the revenues not only of the churches of Canterbury and Winchester, but also of the monasteries of St. Augustine's, St. Alban's, Ely, and Glastonbury *.

Godwin did not long survive the disgrace of his enemies. He died the following Easter (15 April, 1053); A. D. 1053. and the story, which was invented by the malice of party, would persuade us that his death was a visible judgment of Heaven on the murderer of Alfred. He was sitting, we are told, at table with the king. Observing a servant, who had chanced to make a false step, support himself with his other foot, he exclaimed: "See, how one brother assists another!"—"Yes," replied Edward, looking sternly at the earl, "and if Alfred were now alive, he might also assist me." Godwin felt the reproach, loudly protested his innocence, and with the most solemn execrations wished that, if he were guilty, he might not live to eat the morsel which he held in his hand. He put it to his mouth, and immediately expired †. Such is the tale in its most improved state. At its first publication the preparatory incident, and the remark of Edward, appear to have been forgotten ‡. The real fact is, that Godwin on Easter Monday fell speechless from the royal table; that he was carried by his three sons into the king's chamber; and that, after lingering for some time in great torment, he died on the following Thursday §. His earldom was given to Harold: that of Harold to Alfgar the son of Leofric.

The character of this powerful earl has been painted

* Chron. Sax. 157, 158. 169. 170. Hist. Elien. 515. Mail. 158. Spel. con. 628. Vit. S. Wulst 251. Guil. Pict. 105. Ing. 69. Malm. 116.

† Higden, 280. Rudborn, 239. West. 215. Brompton, 943, according to whom the person who made the false step was Harold, Godwin's son, and cup-bearer to the king. ‡ Ingulf. 66. Malm. 45.

§ Chron. Sax. 168. Mailros, 158. Flor. 628.

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by most of our historians in colours of blood. They describe him as a monster of inhumanity, duplicity, and ambition. But their credit is lessened by the consideration that they wrote after the conquest, when every artifice was adopted to persuade the English, that the man whom the Norman had precipitated from the throne, was, on account of his own crimes and those of his father, unworthy to remain on it. To their defamation may be opposed the panegyric of Edward's biographer, who dedicated his work to Editha. If we may believe him, the earl was the father of the people, the support of the nation. To the peaceful and virtuous he was kind, generous, and placable; but the turbulent and lawless trembled at his lion-like countenance, and dreaded the severity of his justice. The English lamented his death as a national calamity, and placed their only consolation in his son Harold, the inheritor of his father's virtues no less than of his honours *. Probably the truth will be found between the exaggerated encomiums of one party and the undistinguishing invectives of the other.

Though the late disturbances had interrupted the general tranquillity, they had been terminated without bloodshed, and had inflicted no considerable injury on the people. The principal calamities of Edward's reign were pestilence and famine, evils which, at this period, occasionally visited every part of Europe. As long as agriculture was in its infancy, each unfavourable season was followed by a year of scarcity; and, while the intercourse between nations was rare and insecure, the wants of one people could not be relieved from the plenty of another. The chroniclers of the age frequently complain of the inclemency of the seasons, of earthquakes, which, on one occasion, created considerable alarm at Derby and at Worcester, of the distress caused by the failure of the

* Vit. Ed. apud Stow, 97. These opposite accounts so perplexed Malmsbury, that he knew not what to believe, or what to reject. Mamm. 46

crops, and of contagious distempers which afflicted not only the cattle, but also the human race*. The benevolent heart of Edward mourned over the calamities of his people, and he eagerly adopted every expedient which seemed likely to remove or to mitigate their sufferings. The Dane-gelt had now been paid for eight-and-thirty years; it formed a considerable part of the royal revenue. In 1051 the king resolved to sacrifice this advantage to the relief of the people; and the abolition of so odious an impost was received by them with every demonstration of gratitude. On another occasion, when his nobles had raised a large sum on their vassals, and begged him to accept the free gift of his faithful subjects, he refused the present as extorted from the labour of the poor, and commanded it to be restored to the original contributors†.

The only foreign war in which the king engaged, was against an usurper, whose infamy has been immortalized by the genius of Shakspeare. In 1039 Duncan, king of Scotland, was murdered by Macbeth. A prince driven by force from the throne of his fathers might justly claim the sympathy of Edward; and Malcolm, the son of Duncan, received from him the permission to vindicate his rights with the aid of an English army. For fifteen years the power of the murderer discouraged every attempt; and the fugitive resided with his uncle, Siward, earl of Northumberland. But when Macduff, the thane of Fife, unfurled the royal standard, Malcolm hastened to the insurgents; Siward accompanied him with a powerful force; and the victory of Lanfanan in Aberdeenshire, by the fall of Macbeth, placed the crown on the head of the rightful heir. Among those who perished in the action was the son of Siward. The hero anxiously inquired in what manner the young man had A. D. 1054

* Chron. Sax. 157. 169. Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1049. 1059. Mailros, 157. In the year 1049 we are told that much corn and many farms in Derbyshire were destroyed by the *wild-fire* (Chron. Lamb. ad ann.), or as it is termed in the chronicle of Mailros, by the *wood-fire* (ignis aereus vulgo dictus silvaticus, Mail. 157). † Ing. 65. Mailros, 127. Hov. 256.

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fallen; and being assured that his wounds were received in front, exclaimed that he was satisfied, and wished for himself no better fate. Soon after his return Siward was attacked by a disorder which proved mortal: but he declared that he would die as he had lived, like a warrior; and ordering his arms to be brought, breathed his last, sitting upright on his bed, and leaning upon his spear *. His son Waltheof was too young to exercise the authority of his father: and the earldom was given to Tostig, the brother of Harold.

A. D. 1055. While the earl of Northumberland was yet in Scotland, the flames of civil war had burst out in England. They seem to have been kindled by the jealousy of Harold, who was indignant that the earldom which he had resigned for that of Godwin, should be given to the rival family of Leofric. At the witena-gemot Ælfgar was accused of treason "against the king and the country." Most of our chroniclers assert his innocence †: a writer, who seems devoted to the interests of Harold, declares that his guilt was established on the most satisfactory evidence ‡. Outlawed by the judgment of the council, Alfgar fled to Ireland, purchased the assistance of a northern sea-king, was joined by Griffith, prince of Wales, and poured his Welsh and Norwegian auxiliaries

* I may be allowed to observe that with respect to this event, lord Hailes (Annals of Scotland, p. 2), appears to have overlooked the statements of our most ancient historians. *He* tells us that "Siward, with the approbation of his sovereign, led the Northumbrians to the aid of Malcolm, but did not live to see the event of his enterprise:" *they* say, that he defeated Macbeth, and placed Malcolm on the throne as Edward had ordered. Siwardus jussu Regis Edwardi et equestri exercitu et classe valida Scottiam adiit, et cum rege Scottorum Macbetha prælium commisit, ac multis millibus Scottorum et Normannis omnibus, quorum supra mentionem fecimus, occisis, illum fugavit, et Malcolmum, ut rex jusserat, regem constituit. Sim. Dun. 187. Florence, p. 629, repeats the same words. Mailros, p. 158, has the same in substance. See also Malmsbury, Macbetha vita reguoque spoliavit, Malcolmum regem instituit, f. 44. Huntingdon, regem bello vicit, regnum totum destruxit, destructum sibi subjugavit, f. 209. Lambard's Saxon Chronicle: "Siward went with a great army into Scotland, both with ship-force, and land-force, and fought with the Scots, and routed the king Macbeth, and slew all the best in the land, and brought thence much spoil, such as no man ever got before." Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1054.

† Ing. 66. Mail. 158. Flor. 629. ‡ Chron. Sax 169.

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nto the county of Hereford. The earl Radulf with his retainers fled at the first onset: the city was taken and pillaged; four hundred of the inhabitants were slain; and the cathedral with the principal buildings was burnt. To revenge this insult the king assembled an army at Gloucester, at the head of which Harold chased the invaders into the fastnesses of Snowdon. A negotiation followed, which restored to Alfgar his former honours. His allies marched immediately to Leicester; and Leofric, who appears to have remained an idle spectator during the contest, was impelled by apprehension or by gratitude to reward their services at its termination. But Leofric died soon afterwards, (30 September, 1057): and Alfgar succeeded to the honours of his father. The former jealousy, and former accusations were immediately revived. Alfgar again lost his earldom; and was again restored, by the arms of Griffith and the Norwegians. But he hardly enjoyed his triumph during a year; and at his death left two sons, Morcar and Edwin, whose unmerited fate will claim the sympathy of the reader *.

The death of Alfgar exposed Griffith to the just resentment of Harold. The Welsh prince and his subjects had long deserved the name and punishment of robbers and assassins. From the recesses of their mountains they had made annual incursions on the inhabitants of the borders; had indulged in plunder, bloodshed, and conflagration; and had eluded the pursuit of vengeance by the celerity of their retreat. When Rhese, the brother of Griffith, fell into the hands of the English, even the meekness of Edward, "whom no injuries could irritate †," ordered him to be put to death; and the king now commissioned Harold to inflict a severe punishment on those persevering robbers. Aware of the difficulties arising from the nature of the country and the fleetness of the enemy, Harold selected a numerous body of young

* Ingulf, 66. Malmes. 158. Flor. 629, 630. † Malm. 44.

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men, vigorous and active, bade them exchange their usual arms for others of less weight and dimensions; and gave them for defence helmets and targets of hardened leather. In the depth of winter he attempted by a sudden irruption to surprise Griffith: but the Welshman escaped, though his ships and mansion were consigned
A. D. to the flames. At the beginning of summer, Tostig,
1053. with a body of cavalry, entered Wales from the North: Harold conveyed his troops by sea, and landed them on the coast. The indefatigable earl, who proceeded on foot, and fared like the meanest of his followers, traversed the country in every direction. Neither mountains nor morasses could screen the natives from the pursuit of their enemy. Wherever the Welsh offered any resistance, he was victorious; and to perpetuate the memory of each victory, he erected a pyramid of stone with this inscription: HERE HAROLD CONQUERED. Overpowered and dismayed they solicited for mercy; and sent as a peace-offering the head of Griffith to the conqueror (Aug. 5). Harold returned in triumph to Edward: the head of the Welshman with the beak and the ornaments of his ship were presented to the English monarch; and his two uterine brothers Blethyn and Rywallon swore fealty, and engaged to pay the ancient tribute. A law was passed condemning every Welshman, found in arms on the east of Offa's dyke, to lose his right hand; and the natives of the mountains, taught by fatal experience, respected during the four next reigns the territory of their neighbours*.

It is probable that the objection of the witan to the king's intended pilgrimage had directed his attention to his nephew and namesake, Edward, the exiled son of his brother, Edmund Ironside. That prince still lived in

* Gir. Camb. in Ang. Sac. ii. 541. Ingulf. 68. Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1063. The chronicle says the Welsh princes swore fealty and gave hostages to the king and the earl. Why to the earl? Had he been appointed Edward's successor? or did they merely become his vassals? At the same time, and by the same authority, Meredith was appointed prince of South Wales, Powel, 103.

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Hungary, and had married a lady of the imperial family,* who bore to him three children, Edgar, Margaret, and Christina. There could be no doubt that he was rightful heir to the crown on the death of the king without children; and Aldred, bishop of Worcester, was sent in 1054 with valuable presents, on an embassy to the emperor Henry III., to procure, through the influence of that prince, the return of the etheling from Hungary. Aldred spent an entire year, partly with Henry, partly with Heriman, archbishop of Cologne; but his efforts were unsuccessful, perhaps on account of the hostile feeling which existed between the emperor and Andrew, king of Hungary. But in 1056 the first of those princes died; and Edward in the following year arrived with his family in London. There is something mysterious in the fate of this prince. In a short time he sickened and died; and although he had been invited to England by the king to perpetuate on the throne the royal race of Cerdic and Alfred, yet it was so contrived that the uncle and nephew never had an opportunity of seeing each other. Will not this suggest, if it do not justify, the suspicion that there was some one who deemed it his interest to keep the etheling separate from the king? However that may be, the invitation sent to him in Hungary is a proof that up to this time Edward could not have made any engagement with William of Normandy, to appoint that prince his successor.

About the close of the following year Aldred undertook and accomplished what had never yet been done by any Anglo-Saxon prelate. Travelling through Germany and A. D. 1058.

* The Saxon chronicle (ann. 1017) tells us that Agatha was Caeraser maga, but does not specify how nearly she was related to the emperor. If we believe Malmsbury (l. 303) and Wendover (l. 463), she was sister to Gisela, the wife of Stephen of Hungary, and sister to the Emperor Henry II. But the writers who, as Florence, Hovenden and Allred, call her the daughter of the brother of the Emperor Henry, must have taken her for a daughter of Bruno, Henry's brother, who had quarrelled with that prince because he would not grant him the duchy of Bavaria, and had sought an asylum in Hungary. They were afterwards reconciled through the good offices of Gisela, and Bruno obtained the bishopric of Augsburg.

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Hungary, he reached Jerusalem, offered his prayers at the holy places, and left on the altar at the sepulchre a chalice of gold, of the weight of five marks.* Soon after

* Chron. Sax. ann. 1058. Wigorn, ann. 1058. Hoved, 255.

[This was an interesting period in the history of the Holy City, and it is to be regretted that we have no fuller memorials of bishop Aldred's visit. Of Ingulf's, however, shortly after, the narrative is preserved, and there are curious accounts of visits by Saxon prelates many centuries before Aldred's.

In the gradual decline of the Greek empire the Fatimite Khalifs of Egypt had seized upon Palestine, and, at the time of Aldred's visit to Jerusalem, had held it for near a century. Their policy, at first, was to open commerce to those regions as largely as they could, — and they freely encouraged pilgrimages from whatever sect or nation. But the despotism of Hakeem, the third Khalif of this dynasty, put an end to this lenity towards pilgrims, and his cruelty fell upon the Christians as severely as upon the rest of his empire. Before him, the revolution which in 969 had transferred the rule to the Fatimites had been rather an advantage than otherwise to the Holy Land. His reign, however, was a misery to all. In Egypt he insulted the oldest customs and prejudices. The revolt of his people there became an excuse for greater severities. In a new frenzy, he proclaimed himself the visible image of the most high God, who, after nine appearances on earth, was at length manifest in his royal person. With this blasphemous pretence, he assailed all religions, sparing Mussulmans, apparently, only from some lingering considerations of prudence. In Palestine the Christians and Christian pilgrims suffered everything: and the devotions of strangers and natives alike were prohibited. The church of the Resurrection was wholly destroyed: and an effort was made to destroy, also, the cave in the rock, which bore then, as it does now, the name of the Holy Sepulchre.

It was not till the year of his assassination, in 1021, that such obstacles to pilgrimage were removed. His successors restored the policy of the first Fatimites. With the new opportunity the passion for such sacred journeys reached its height. The indignation with which Europe had heard of his atrocities now sent thousands to visit the scenes of them. The church at Jerusalem, which had been destroyed in 1008, was rebuilt by the grandson of Hakeem in 1048, in accordance with a treaty which he made with the Greek emperor.

Meanwhile, the conversion of Stephen, who is called the apostle of Hungary, opened a way for pilgrimage through his dominions by land, from the west of Europe. Aldred's visit to his dominions perhaps suggested to him the after adventure, as it appears he took the new route to Jerusalem. Ingulf, afterwards William the Conqueror's secretary, whose works are frequently alluded to in these pages, made this journey, in the year 1064, with several other prelates, and a retinue amounting to seven thousand persons. His narrative, and those of some of his companions, may be found, nearly complete, in the ecclesiastical annals of Baronius, — at the year of their pilgrimage.

The passage in the Saxon Chronicle referred to in the text is as follows: "In the same year bishop Aldred consecrated the minster at Gloucester, which himself had raised to the glory of God and of St. Peter; and so he went to Jerusalem with such splendour as none other had displayed before him, and there devoted himself to God: and a worthy gift he also offered at our Lord's tomb; that was a golden chalice of five marks of very wonderful work."

See Wright's Pref. to the Travels in Palestine of Arculf, Willibald, &c.; Gibbon ch. lvii., and Baron. ad ann. 1064. — AMER. EDIT.]

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his return, Kinsey, archbishop of York, died; and Aldred in the course of three days was appointed to succeed him, with permission to keep at the same time the bishopric of Worcester, as had been done by some of his predecessors. In a short time he proceeded to Rome, having in his company Tortig, earl of Northumbria, with his wife Judith, the daughter of Baldiere, earl of Flanders, and two bishops elect, Giso of Wells, and Walter of Hereford. The earl and countess sought probably to gratify their curiosity or devotion; the bishops elect to obtain consecration abroad because they could not obtain it at home, on account of the suspension of Stigand: Aldred had two objects in view, to procure for himself the pallium, and for Edward the papal confirmation of certain new privileges which he had lately conferred on his new abbey of Westminster. Nicholas received them with honour; granted the confirmation solicited by the king, examined and consecrated the two bishops elect, and, though at first he refused the pallium to Aldred, because his election had been tainted with simony, granted it to him at last, on condition that he should resign the bishopric of Worcester. Ermanfroi, bishop of Sion, with another cardinal, followed the pilgrims as papal legates to England, waited on the king at Westminster, and presided at the election of a new bishop at Worcester, which election, with Edward's permission, was conducted according to the strict letter of the canons. What proposal they made to Edward, and what answer they received from him at Easter by advice of the witan, we are ignorant. The new bishop of Worcester was Wulstan, prior of the cathedral, who received consecration from the hands of Aldred.*

* Compare Malmsbury (De Pont. 154, 159) and Ang. Sac. ii. 250, with the Chronicle and Hoveden, ann. 1069. Aldred publicly acknowledged at the consecration that he claimed no jurisdiction within the southern province, and Wulstan made his promise of canonical obedience to the church of Canterbury. Hoved. ibid.

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By the course of events Harold was become the most powerful subject in England. After the death of Edward (surnamed the Outlaw) but one individual stood between him and the crown, the object of his ambition, Edgar the son of that Edward, a young prince, feeble in body and still more feeble in mind, whose hereditary right was sunk in his inaptitude to govern. But the other side of the channel exhibited a more formidable competitor, in the person of William, Duke of Normandy. It was evident that by descent neither could boast the remotest claim. William was the illegitimate son of Robert, the nephew of Emma: Harold's only connexion with the royal family arose from the marriage of his sister with Edward *. Their real title lay in their power and ambition: and in the latter William was equal, in the former he was superior to Harold. Unfortunately for the English earl, a vessel, in which he had sailed from
A.D. Bosenham, was accidentally stranded in the mouth of
065. the river Maye, on the opposite coast of Ponthieu. A

* For the satisfaction of the reader, I shall subjoin a short genealogy of William's descent from Rollo, the first Duke of Normandy.

Rollo, died in 917.
William + 943.
Richar I. + 996.
Richard II. + 1026. Emma = Ethelred + 1016.
Richard III.+10[illegible]6. Robert+1035. Edmund+1016. Edward+1066. without issue.
William, by Herleva, a concubine. Edward + 1057.
Edgar Atheling.

The descent of Harold can be traced no farther back than his grandfather Wulfnoth, "child of Sussex." His father Godwin had married Gyda, the sister of Ulfr, brother-in-law to Canute. Of the connexion between Godwin and Ulfr, Mr. Turner has given from the Knytlinge Saga an account, which savours more of romance than of history

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barbarous custom had invested the lord of the district with a pretended right not only to the remains of the wreck, but also to the persons of the survivors: nor were imprisonment, threats, and torments spared to extort from the captives an exorbitant ransom. Harold and his companions were seized on the beach, conducted to the earl Guy, by whom they were immured within his castle of Beaurain. No circumstance could have been more propitious to the views of William. He demanded the prisoners: they were surrendered to him at Eu in Normandy; and the compliance of Guy was rewarded with a valuable donation of land. In the Norman court Harold was treated with respect and munificence: but he enjoyed only the semblance of liberty, and soon had reason to regret the dungeons of Beaurain. Compelled by the necessity of his situation, he consented to do homage for his lands and honours to William, as the apparent successor of Edward. But the jealousy of the Norman required more than the mere ceremony of homage. Before an assembly of his barons, Harold was constrained to swear that he would promote the succession of the duke to the English crown, that he would guard his interests in the court of Edward, and that he would admit a Norman garrison into his castle of Dover. At length, loaded with presents but distressed in mind, he was permitted to leave the territory of his rival. He had obtained from the gratitude of William the liberation of his nephew, Haco, one of the hostages, whom Edward had formerly required from Godwin; Wulfnoth, the other, was detained by the policy of the Norman, as a security for the faith of his brother *.

That Harold was thus delivered up by the earl of Ponthieu, and was compelled to swear fealty to William, are indisputable facts: but the object which originally induced him to put to sea, is a subject of doubt and investigation. By the Norman writers, and those who follow

* See the account in William of Poitou, who received the particulars of the oath from persons who were present. Guil. Pict. 79, 80. 85.

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them, we are told, that Edward, moved by gratitude and relationship, had appointed William his successor, and that Harold was sent to notify this appointment to the duke *. Nor, indeed, is it improbable that such a report should be circulated in Normandy, as a justification for the violence which was offered to Harold. Many of the English historians have preserved, or invented, a different account. If we may believe them, the earl intended to visit William, but his object was to solicit the liberty of the hostages, Haco and Wulfnoth †. It is, however, difficult to conceive that a man ambitious of a crown, would, for the freedom of two captives, trust himself and the success of his projects, to the mercy of a rival. Perhaps it were more safe to rely on the authority of those writers, who appear ignorant of both these reports; and who describe the voyage of Harold as an occasional excursion along the coast, from which he was driven by a storm on the barbarous territory of Ponthieu ‡.

It was about the end of summer, when the earl returned to England ‖; his services were immediately required by an insurrection of the Northumbrians. Tostig had governed that people with the rapacity of a despot, and the cruelty of a barbarian. In the preceding year he had perfidiously murdered two of the noblest thanes in his palace at York: at his request Editha had ordered the assassination of Gospatric in Edward's court; and the recent imposition of an extraordinary tax, as it was universally felt, had armed the whole population against his government. In the beginning of October the insurgents surprised York. Tostig fled; his treasures and armoury were pillaged; his guards, to the number of two hundred, both Danes and English, with their comman-

* Guil. Piet. 77. Order. Vit. 492. Wil. Gemet. 285.

† Eadm. 4. Sim. Dunel. 195. Hemingford. 456.

‡ Mat. Paris, 2. West. 218. Malm. 52.

‖ No writer that I know has fixed the date of Harold's detention in Normandy; but we learn from Pictaviensis, that the corn in Bretagne was almost ripe. (Piet. 81. 85.)

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ders, Amund and Ravenswarth, were made prisoners, conducted out of the city, and massacred in cold blood on the north bank of the Ouse. Elated with their success the insurgents chose for their future earl Morcar, the son of Alfgar; and that nobleman, with the men of Lincoln, Nottingham, and Derbyshire, and his brother Edwin with those of Leicester, and a body of Welsh auxiliaries, advanced as far south as Northampton. Here they were met by Harold. When he inquired into the nature of their demands, they replied, that they were freemen, and would not tamely submit to oppression; that they required the confirmation of the laws of Canute, and the appointment of Morcar to the earldom of Northumberland. Harold returned, and obtained the royal assent to their requests: but during his absence and at their departure, they plundered the country, burnt the villages, and carried away several hundreds of the inhabitants, who were destined to a life of slavery, unless their ransom should be afterwards paid by their friends. Tostig, dissatisfied with the pacification, repaired to Bruges, the usual asylum of his family *.

If, on this occasion, Harold appeared to desert the cause of his brother, we may attribute his moderation, not only to the formidable appearance of the insurgents, but also to a prudent regard for his own interest. The king was hastening to the grave; and the success of the earl's projects required his presence in London, a period of tranquillity, and the good will of the people. He returned to the metropolis on the 30th November, five weeks before Edward breathed his last. The monarch previously to his decease had the satisfaction of witnessing the dedication of the church of Westminster, which had been the great object of his solicitude during his latter years. When the witan opposed his journey to Rome, Leo IX. authorized him to commute his intended pilgrimage for some other work of piety. With this

* Chron. Sax. 171. Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1065. Flor. 633.

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view he set apart the tenth of his yearly revenue, and rebuilt from its foundation the church of St. Peter, at the western extremity of the capital. On the vigil of Christmas he was attacked by the fever which ultimately proved fatal. For three days he struggled against the violence of the disease, held his court as usual, and presided with affected cheerfulness at the royal banquets. On the festival of the Innocents, the day appointed for the dedication of the new church, he was unable to leave his chamber. The ceremony was, however, performed. Editha took the charge of the decorations, and represented the royal founder. But his absence and the idea of his danger, diffused a deep gloom among the thousands who had assembled to witness the spectacle. After lingering a week longer, Edward died on the 5th of January, and was buried the following day with royal pomp in the church which he had erected *.

A. D. 1066.

If we estimate the character of a sovereign by the test of popular affection, we must rank Edward among the best princes of his time. The goodness of his heart was adored by his subjects, who lamented his death with

* Chron. Sax. 171. Spelm. con. 628—637. Cum insigni regio. Hist. Ram. 460. Ailred Riev. 398, 399. Here it may be asked whether Edward, before his death, did or did not appoint a successor? It is evident that he had looked on his nephew, Edward the Outlaw, as the rightful heir, and on that account sent for him from Hungary to England. At the death of that prince in 1057, we are told that fears concerning the succession began to be entertained (spes regii sanguinis deinceps deficere cœpit, Ing. 66. Malm. ii. 2): but that it was not till 1065, the last year of his reign, that Edward abandoned the hope of placing on the throne Edgar, the son of his nephew. (Ing. 68.) Whether during that year he appointed either William or Harold, must for ever remain uncertain. They both asserted it: but it was so much for the interest of each to have it believed, that neither can deserve credit. It is observable that Ingulf, who was at the time absent on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, tells us, not that Harold, but that Robert of Canterbury, was sent to announce to William his appointment (p. 68): and yet Ingulf could not have been ignorant that Robert had been driven from England thirteen years before. William of Poitou (p. 44), another contemporary writer, assigns the same mission to Robert, when, by the advice of the witan he conducted Wulfnoth and Hacon as hostages to William. But we know that Robert, instead of conducting hostages, fled for his life; and that the hostages were given by Godwin after his departure. Can it be that Robert on his return to Normandy first suggested to William the idea of claiming the succession, and hence was supposed to have offered it by the commission of Edward?

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tears of undissembled grief, and bequeathed his memory as an object of veneration to their posterity. The blessings of his reign are the constant theme of our ancient writers: not, indeed, that he displayed any of those brilliant qualities, which attract admiration, while they inflict misery. He could not boast of the victories which he had won, or of the conquests which he had achieved: but he exhibited the interesting spectacle of a king, negligent of his private interests, and totally devoted to the welfare of his people; and by his labours to restore the dominion of the laws; his vigilance to ward off foreign aggression; his constant, and ultimately successful, solicitude to appease the feuds of his nobles, if he did not prevent the interruption, he secured at least a longer duration of public tranquillity than had been enjoyed in England for half a century. He was pious, kind, and compassionate; the father of the poor, and the protector of the weak; more willing to give than to receive; and better pleased to pardon than to punish *. Under the preceding kings, force generally supplied the place of justice, and the people were impoverished by the rapacity of the sovereign. But Edward enforced the laws of his Saxon predecessors, and disdained the riches which were wrung from the labours of his subjects. Temperate in his diet, unostentatious in his person, pursuing no pleasures but those which his hawks and hounds afforded, he was content with the patrimonial demesnes of the crown; and was able to assert, even after the abolition of that fruitful source of revenue, the Dane-gelt, that he possessed a greater portion of wealth than any of his predecessors had enjoyed. To him the principle that the king can do no wrong, was literally

* An uninteresting story told by Malmsbury has been brought forward to prove that the simplicity of Edward bordered on childishness, and that he was so ignorant as not to know that kings possessed the power of punishing offenders. The inference is not warranted by the original story, which merely asserts, that to a peasant who had broken the king's nets, Edward angrily said: "I will do as much to you, if I have an opportunity." Tantundem tibi nocebo, si potero. Malm. 44.

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applied by the gratitude of the people, who, if they occasionally complained of the measures of the government, (and much reason they had to complain on account of the appointment to bishoprics of aspiring and rapacious adventurers,) attributed the blame not to the monarch himself, of whose benevolence and piety they entertained no doubt, but to the ministers, who had abused his confidence, or deceived his credulity *.

It was, however, a fortunate circumstance for the memory of Edward, that he occupied the interval between the Danish and Norman conquests. Writers were induced to view his character with more partiality from the hatred with which they looked on his successors and predecessors. *They* were foreigners, *he* was a native: they held the crown by conquest, he by descent: they ground to the dust the slaves whom they had made, he became known to his countrymen only by his benefits. Hence he appeared to shine with a purer light amid the gloom with which he was surrounded; and whenever the people under the despotism of the Norman kings had an opportunity of expressing their real wishes, they constantly called for "the laws and customs of the good "king Edward."

He was the first of our princes who touched for the king's evil. The surname of "the Confessor" was given to him from the bull of his canonization, issued by Alexander III., about a century after his decease

HAROLD.

By the death of Edward, Edgar the etheling became the last surviving male of the race of Cerdic: but, if his claim were ever mentioned, it was instantly abandoned †. A report had been circulated that Edward, on his death bed, had appointed Harold to be his successor ‡. He

* Hist. Ram. 450. Elien. 515. Malm. 44. Ingul. 69.

† Quia puer tanto honori minus idoneus videbatur. Alur. Riev. 366.

‡ I am much inclined to believe this report, not only on the testimony of the English writers (Chron. Sax. 172. Hoved. 449. Eadmer, 5. Sim.

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was proclaimed king in an assembly of the thanes and of the citizens of London; and the next day witnessed both the funeral of the late, and the coronation of the new sovereign. On account of the suspension of Stigand, the ceremony was performed by Aldred, the archbishop of York *. To Edgar, in lieu of the crown, was given the earldom of Oxford. Jan 6th.

The southern counties cheerfully acquiesced in the succession of Harold: he was alarmed and perplexed by the hesitation of the Northumbrians. Their pride refused to be bound by the act of those whose military qualities they deemed inferior to their own; and they looked around for a chieftain, who would solicit their aid, and accept the crown from their hands. Harold hastened into the north: instead of an army he was accompanied by Wulstan, the venerable bishop of Worcester; by whose influence, combined with his own conciliatory conduct, he soon won the affections, and secured the obedience of the Northumbrians. His marriage with Editha, the daughter of Alfgar, bound to his interest her two brothers, the powerful earls Morcar and Edwin †.

The intelligence both of the death of Edward, and of the immediate coronation of Harold, had been conveyed to Normandy by the same messenger. William assembled his council, informed them of the event, and expressed his determination to pursue by arms his pretensions to the crown of England. An envoy was despatched

Dun. 193., Al. Bev. 126. Flor. 633. Hist. Elien. 515): but because its truth is acknowledged by the enemies of Harold. Edvardi dono in ipsius fine. Guil. Pict. 135. Ægrotus princeps concessit. Order. Vit. 492.

* Ingulf, 68. Flor. 633. Hist. Elien. 515. In a fact, which publicly took place in England, the native writers are more entitled to credit than foreigners. The Normans say Harold was crowned by Stigand (non sancta consecratione Stigandi, Guil. Pict. 105): and the statement is supported by the figures on the tapestry of Bayeux (Lancelot, 421). But they give us only the reports prevalent in Normandy: and William, anxious to interest the religion of his subjects in his own favour, would readily countenance the notion that his rival had been crowned by a suspended prelate.

† Ang. Sac. ii. 253.

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to remind Harold of his former oath of fealty, and promise of assistance. The king replied: that the oath had been extorted from him by force; that a promise to give a crown which did not belong to him, could not be binding; that he had been elected king by the free suffrage of the people; and that, when it should come to the trial, he would prove himself worthy of their choice. The message was such as Harold, the answer such as William, expected. Each had already determined to appeal to the sword; and the English no less than the Normans were astonished at the mighty preparations made to decide the important quarrel *.

It was unfortunate for Harold that he had to contend at the same time not only with William, but with his brother Tostig, the exiled earl of Northumberland, in whom he experienced a most bitter and enterprising adversary. The outlaw visited Normandy, and arranged a plan of co-operation with the duke: he sent messengers to the northern princes, and engaged the assistance of Harald Hardrada, the king of Norway; he collected a fleet of sixty sail at Bruges, and entering the channel began the war by levying contributions in the Isle of Wight. But he retired upon the approach of his brother, and sailing round the south foreland, directed his course to the north. In Lindesey he was defeated by Edwin: his mariners abandoned him in his distress; and Malcolm, king of Scotland, afforded him an asylum till the arrival of his Norwegian ally †. The armament under Hardrada was not ready for sea till the month of August; when the Norwegian monarch, leaving the regency of the kingdom to his son Magnus, embarked with his family and a gallant army in a fleet of three hundred sail. His queen Elizabeth and her two daughters, fearing the dangers of the campaign, were set on shore at the Orkneys; and Hardrada, according to

* Ing. 68. Eadm. 5. Matt. Paris. Malm. 56.
† Chron. Sax. 172. Malm. 52. Hunt. 210. Snorre, iii. 146. Order. Vit. apud Duchesne 469 492. Gemetic. 285

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agreement, was joined by Tostig with a few ships at the mouth of the Tyne. Their first object was to obtain possession of York; and with this view they entered the Humber and ascended the Ouse. A desperate attempt to save that capital was made by the earls Edwin and Morcar. The Norwegian had drawn up his men with their right flank to the river, and their left to a morass. The impetuosity of the English burst through the line: but they in their turn were overwhelmed by a fresh body of forces from the ships; and more of the fugitives perished in the water than had fallen by the sword. Edwin and Morcar escaped to York: negotiations were opened; and the mutual exchange of one hundred and fifty hostages shews, that the province was conditionally surrendered to the invaders *. Sept. 20th.

Harold had completed his preparations, and having selected a position between Pevensey and Hastings, awaited with confidence the threatened descent of the Norman. The unexpected invasion of Hardrada disconcerted his projects. Trusting, however, to his fortune, and encouraged by the tempestuous state of the weather, he lost not a moment in marching against the aggressor, and arrived in the neighbourhood of York within four days after the late battle. Unconscious of danger Hardrada had left one part of his forces on board the fleet, while he marched with the other for the purpose of dividing and regulating the province which he had conquered. In this employment he was overtaken by the indefatigable Harold. Surprised, but not dismayed, the Norwegian sent three messengers to the fleet to hasten the march of his men, while he retired slowly to Stamford-bridge on the Derwent. There he drew up his warriors in a compact but hollow circle. The royal standard occupied the centre: the circumference was composed of spearmen. The whole was Sept. 27th.

* Chron. Sax. 172. Snorre, 153—155. Flor. 634. Higden, 284.

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surrounded by a line of spears firmly fixed in the earth, and pointed outwards in an oblique direction.

The Icelandic historian has preserved some curious anecdotes respecting this celebrated battle. Hardrada wore a blue mantle and a glittering helmet. As he rode round the circle, his horse fell. "Who," exclaimed Harold, "is that chieftain on the ground?" Being told it was Hardrada. "He is," returned the king, "a gallant warrior: but his fall shews that his "fate is approaching." Soon afterwards a messenger came from the English monarch with an offer of the earldom of Northumberland to Tostig. "The proposal," said the outlaw, "should have been made some months "ago. But if I accept it, what will my brother give to "the king of Norway?" "Seven feet of land for a "grave," was the contemptuous reply. Tostig scorned to abandon his friend.

The English cavalry were accustomed to charge in irregular masses; and, if they met with resistance, to disperse in every direction, and re-assemble upon a given point. The firm array of the Norwegians bade defiance to all their efforts; and Harold with his great superiority of force might yet have been foiled, had not the ardour of the enemy seduced them to break their ranks, and pursue the fugitive cavalry. That instant the English rushed into the opening; and in the confusion Hardrada was shot through the neck with an arrow. He fell instantly: and Tostig assumed the command. A second offer from Harold was indignantly refused; the arrival of the expected aid revived the fainting spirits of the Norwegians; and a desperate but unavailing effort was made to wrest the victory out of the hands of the English. The battle was continued by the obstinacy of the enemy long after every reasonable hope of success had been extinguished; and it was only terminated by the death of Tostig, and of every celebrated chieftain in the Norwegian army. This action

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is considered as one of the most bloody that is recorded in our annals; and at the distance of fifty years the spot was still whitened with the bones of the slain *.

The courage of Harold was tempered with humanity. He sent for Olave, the younger son of Hardrada, who, accompanied by his bishop, and the earl of the Orkneys, obeyed the summons of the conqueror. He experienced a courteous reception; swore to live in amity with England; and was dismissed with twelve ships to revisit his native country. A few days were necessarily employed by Harold in taking possession of the Norwegian fleet, securing the spoil, and refreshing his exhausted troops. He repaired to York: but the public rejoicing of the citizens could not tranquillize his impatience to learn the motions of his remaining and most formidable competitor. The king was seated at the royal banquet, and surrounded by his thanes, when a messenger entered the hall, and announced the arrival and descent of the Normans on the coast of Sussex. The battle of Stamford-bridge had been fought on the twenty-seventh, William effected his landing on the twenty-ninth, of September †.

That prince had employed eight months in the most active preparations for the invasion. By the gravest of his counsellors it was deemed a most hazardous enterprise: but his confidence was not to be shaken by their suggestions; and the people, catching the spirit, seconded with all their zeal the exertions of their duke. Nor was

* Snorre, 156—165. Ing. 69. Chron. Sax. 172. Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1066. Hunt. 210. Order. Vit. apud Maseres. 174. Tostig had married Judith, the daughter of Baldwin, earl of Flanders. She afterwards espoused the son of Azo and Cunegunda, Guelph I. or V., from whom in a direct line the present royal family of England is descended. But I do not find that her first husband Tostig ever took the title of king of England, as is supposed by Gibbon, Miscel. Works, iii. 192.

† Hunt. 210. Hist. Rames. 462. The printed chronicle (172) says, William landed on Michaelmas-day: and this I conceive to be the meaning of Orderic, who says he crossed the sea on the night preceding (175). I cannot, however, agree with Orderic (184), or with Gemmeticensis (vii. 34), that the battle of Stamford-bridge was fought on the 7th of October. The English writers place it on the 25th or 27th of September.

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this enthusiasm confined to his own subjects. Bretons, Poitevins, Burgundians, and warriors from every province of France, crowded to his standard; and by the beginning of August he found himself at the head of fifty thousand cavalry, besides a smaller body of infantry *. All had been taught to believe, that they were called to fight in the cause of justice against an usurper, of religion against a perjured traitor. Whatever claim other individuals might prefer to the crown of England, Harold, the *man*, the liege subject of William, could not lawfully withhold it from his lord. To strengthen these impressions the duke had sent an embassy to pope Alexander III., from whom he had received a consecrated banner. This might be no more than a return of politeness on the part of the pontiff: but to the troops it was represented as the sanction of their intended expedition †, by the head of their church.

To furnish transports for this numerous body of men, for their arms, horses, and provisions, every vessel in Normandy had been put in requisition. But the supply was still inadequate: and many individuals sought the favour of their prince, by building others at their own expense in the different harbours and creeks. The general rendezvous was appointed at the mouth of the Dive, a small river which flows into the sea between the broader streams of the Orne and the Touques; and in the month of August its shallow estuary was covered with one thousand, or, according to some historians, with three thousand vessels of every size and description ‡. Still the success of the enterprise depended much on the caprice of the weather. As soon as the

* Millia *militum* quinquaginta. Pict. 106. *Virorum* sexaginta millia. Id. 112. Quinquaginta milia *militum*, cum copie *peditum*. Orderic, 174. These passages plainly prove that the *milites* fought on horseback.

† Pict. 106, 107. Malm. 56.

‡ Pic. 109. Gemet. p. 665. Malm. iii. 56. The duke's ship was a present from his wife Matilda. On the prow was an image of gold, representing a boy, who with his right hand pointed to England, and with his left held a trumpet of ivory to his mouth. Lyt. Hist. vol. I. app. out of an ancient MS. p. 463, also at the end of Taylor's Gavel-kind.

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army was prepared to embark, the wind veered to the north-east: and for more than a month it continued stationary at the same point. It was not till the approach of the equinox that a breeze from the west released the fleet from its tedious confinement. The Normans eagerly seized the opportunity of putting to sea: but the wind gradually became more violent: the skill of the mariners was baffled by the turbulence of the elements and by the fears of the soldiers: and though a great part of the fleet reached St. Valery near Dieppe, the whole coast was covered with fragments of wreck and the bodies of the drowned *. This was a severe check to the impatience of William. He laboured to interest Heaven in his behalf: the shrine of St. Valery was carried in procession; and the whole army joined in public supplications for a favourable wind. At last their wishes were gratified; and the Duke led the way with a lantern suspended from the head of the mast, as a guide to his followers during the darkness of the night: but so unequal was their speed, that when he had reached the English shore, the others were scattered in different directions over a line of twenty leagues from one coast to the other. In this situation they would have offered an easy victory to the fleet of Harold: but unfortunately it had previously dispersed to procure provisions; and the different squadrons had been detained in port by the violence of the weather †. The Normans landed without opposition at Pevensey (Sept. 29), marched immediately to Hastings, and threw up fortifications, at both places, to protect their transports, and secure a retreat in case of disaster ‡. Nor was the precaution useless. Within a few days the

* Pict. 108. Order, 175.

† Flor. 634. The fleet separated on the 8th of August: but assembled again within a fortnight after the arrival of the Normans.

‡ Quæ sibi forent receptaculo, et navibus propugnaculo. Order. Vit. apud Maseres, 175. The custodia navium is also mentioned by Pictavensis, p. 112. Hence the assertion of later writers, that he burnt all his ships, must be unfounded. I suspect the fear of losing them was the reason that he never ventured from the coast, till after the decisive battle of Hastings.

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two ports were blockaded by the whole navy of England *.

In this emergency the conduct of Harold has been severely censured. It is alleged that intoxicated with his late success he deemed himself invincible: that by his avarice in appropriating to himself the spoils of the Norwegians, he deprived the country of the services of his veterans; and that by his imprudence he wantonly staked the independence of England on the exertions of a handful of men, hastily collected, and unpractised in warfare. Perhaps these charges have no other foundation than the prejudices of writers, who sought to console their own pride and that of their readers, by ascribing the subjugation of the country to the incapacity of its ruler. On the receipt of the intelligence the king flew to the capital. It is probable that before his march to the north he had left directions for troops to assemble at London in the case of invasion: it is certain that thousands hastened to his standard, and that in six days he thought himself a match for his rival †. In the beginning of October he was feasting at York: on the fourteenth of the same month he had reached the camp of the Normans. But no celerity could surprise the vigilance of William. His scouts brought him advice

* The Norman writers, anxious to exaggerate the forces of the conquered, make the English fleet amount to 700 sail. Pict. 127. Vit. 177.

† Within these six days we are told that messages were exchanged between the two rivals. An English monk, on the part of Harold, acknowledged the prior right of William; but maintained that Edward had, on his death-bed, left the crown to Harold, and that the last disposition had revoked the former. A monk of Fecamp replied, on the part of William, that Edward had given him the crown by the advice of his witan; that Godwin, Stigand, Leofric, and Siward had sworn to allow no other prince to succeed; that hostages had been given for the execution of their oaths; that Harold had afterwards, at the command of Edward, taken upon himself a similar obligation; that William had no objection to submit his claim to the decision of the laws, either English or Norman; or that, if his rival preferred it, he was ready to meet him in single combat. Harold merely replied, that God should judge between them. Pict. 112—126. I distrust the whole of this story. Reasons have already been adduced to make it doubtful, whether Edward the Confessor ever promised the succession to William: and the arrival of Edward the Outlaw as the presumptive heir to the crown in 1057, shews that the assertions said to have been by the monk of Fecamp, are in all probability false.

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of the approach of the English. He made immediate preparations for the impending combat; recalled the detachments which had been sent out to plunder, and retiring to his tent, attended at mass, and received the communion *.

In the casuistry of that age no crime was reckoned more shameful or more atrocious than the treason of a vassal against his lord; and William seems to have been powerfully impressed with the notion, which had been so industriously propagated among his troops, that Heaven would not fail to avenge upon Harold the violation of his oath. When he was told that the king of England accompanied the army, he expressed his astonishment that a man, conscious of the guilt of perjury, should venture his person in battle †. The same sentiment was prevalent among the English. The brothers of Harold earnestly intreated him to absent himself from the field. "You have sworn," they said, "fealty to William: you "cannot lawfully fight against a prince, to whom, in the "name of God, you have promised submission. Leave "to us the direction of the battle. We are bound by no "oaths. We know nothing of the Norman except as "the enemy of our country." The king laughed at their apprehensions ‡.

The spot which he had selected for this important contest was called Senlac, nine miles from Hastings, an eminence opening to the south, and covered on the back by an extensive wood (Oct. 14) ‖. As his troops arrived he posted them on the declivity in one compact and immense mass. In the centre waved the royal standard,

* This circumstance probably gave occasion to the statement of Malmsbury (56, 57), that the English spent the night before the battle in drinking, the Normans in prayer. The fact is, that Harold hastened to take the enemy unawares; and partly succeeded, as several detachments had gone out to plunder in the morning before his approach was known. Pict. 197.

† Taylor's Ann. 192. ‡ Order. Vit. 176. Malm. 56.

‖ Some writers have supposed the name was derived from Sangue-lac, or the lake of blood, in allusion to the carnage made in this battle. But Orderic assures us that Senlac was the ancient name. Locus, qui *Senlac* antiquitus vocabatur.

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the figure of a warrior in the act of fighting, worked in thread of gold, and ornamented with precious stones. By its side stood Harold and his two brothers Gurth and Leofwin; and around them the rest of the army, every man on foot. In this arrangement the king seems to have adopted, as far as circumstances would permit, the plan which had lately proved so fatal to the Norwegians, and which now, from the same causes, was productive of a similar result. Probably he feared the shock of the numerous cavalry of the Normans. Both men and horses were completely cased in armour, which gave to their charge an irresistible weight, and rendered them almost invulnerable by ordinary weapons. For the purpose of opposing them with more chance of success Harold had brought with him engines to discharge stones into their ranks, and had recommended to his soldiers to confine themselves in close fight to the use of the battle-axe, a heavy and murderous weapon.

On the opposite hill, William was employed in marshalling his host. In the front he placed the archers and bowmen: the second line was composed of heavy infantry clothed in coats of mail; and behind these the duke arranged in five divisions, the hope and the pride of the Norman force, the knights and men-at-arms. That he would strive both by words and actions to infuse into this multitude of warriors from different nations an ardour similar to his own, is not improbable: but the two harangues which William of Poitou, and Henry of Huntingdon, have put into his mouth, may with equal probability be attributed to the ingenuity of the writers. This only we know from himself, that in the hearing of his barons, he made a solemn vow to God, that if he gained the victory, he would found a church for the common benefit of all his followers. About nine in the morning the army began to move, crossed the interval between the two hills, and slowly ascended the eminence on which the English were posted. The papal banner, as an omen of victory, was carried in the front by Toustain

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the fair, a dangerous honour which two of the Norman barons had successively declined *.

At the moment when the armies were ready to engage, the Normans raised the national shout of "God is our "help," which was as loudly answered by the adverse cry of "Christ's rood, the holy rood." The archers, after the discharge of their arrows, retired to the infantry, whose weak and extended line was unable to make any impression on their more numerous opponents. William ordered the cavalry to charge. The shock was dreadful: but the English in every point opposed a solid and impenetrable mass. Neither buckler nor corslet could withstand the stroke of the battle-axe, wielded by a powerful arm and with unerring aim; and the confidence of the Normans melted away at the view of their own loss, and the bold countenance of their enemies. After a short pause the horse and foot of the left wing betook themselves to flight; their opponents eagerly pursued; and a report was spread that William himself had fallen. The whole army began to waver; when the duke with his helmet in his hand, rode along the line, exclaiming: "I am still alive, and, with the help of "God, I still shall conquer." The presence and confidence of their commander revived the hopes of the Normans; and the speedy destruction of the English, who had pursued the fugitives, was fondly magnified into an assurance of victory. These brave but incautious men had, on their return, been intercepted by a numerous body of cavalry; and on foot and in confusion they quickly disappeared beneath the swords or rather the horses of the enemy. Not a man survived the carnage.

William led his troops again to the attack: but the English column, dense and immoveable as a rock amidst the waves, resisted every assault. Disappointed and perplexed, the Norman had recourse to a stratagem,

* Pict. 127. Hunt. 210, 211. Orderic, 178. He made the vow ad eorum corda roboranda. New. Rym. i. 4.

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suggested by his success in the earlier part of the day. He ordered a division of horse to flee: they were pursued; and the temerity of the pursuers was punished with instant destruction. The same feint was tried with equal success in another part of the field. These losses might diminish the numbers of the English: but the main body obstinately maintained its position; and bade defiance to every effort of the Normans*.

During the engagement William had given the most signal proofs of personal bravery. Three horses had been killed under him; and he had been compelled to grapple on foot with his adversaries. Harold also had animated his followers, both by word and example, and had displayed a courage worthy of the crown for which he was fighting. His brothers Gurth and Leofwin had perished already: but as long as *he* survived, no man entertained the apprehension of defeat or admitted the idea of flight. A little before sunset an arrow shot at random, entered his eye. He instantly fell; and the knowledge of his fall relaxed the efforts of the English. Twenty Normans undertook to seize the royal banner; and effected their purpose, but with the loss of half their number. One of them, who maimed with his sword the dead body of the king, was afterwards disgraced by William for his brutality. At dusk the English broke up, and dispersed through the wood. The Normans followed their track by the light of the moon, when ignorance of the country led them to a spot intersected with ditches, into which they were precipitated in the ardour of pursuit. The fugitives, recalled by the accident, inflicted a severe vengeance on their adversaries. As William, attracted by the cries of the combatants, was hastening to the place, he met Eustace of Boulogne and fifty knights fleeing with all their speed. He called on them to stop: but the earl, while he was in the act of whispering into the ear of the duke, received a stroke on

* Pict. 128—131. Orderic, 179.

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the back, which forced the blood out of his mouth and nostrils. He was carried in a state of insensibility to his tent: William's intrepidity hurried him forward to the scene of danger. His presence encouraged his men; succours arrived; and the English, after an obstinate resistance, were repulsed *.

Thus ended this memorable and fatal battle. On the side of the victors almost sixty thousand men had been engaged, and more than one-fourth were left on the field. The number of the vanquished, and the amount of their loss, are unknown. By the vanity of the Norman historians the English army has been exaggerated beyond the limits of credibility: by that of the native writers it has been reduced to a handful of resolute warriors †: but both agree that with Harold and his brothers perished all the nobility of the south of England; a loss which could not be repaired. The king's mother begged as a boon the dead body of her son; and offered as a ransom its weight in gold ‡: but the resentment of William had rendered him callous to pity, and insensible to all interested considerations. He ordered the corpse of the fallen monarch to be buried on the beach; adding with a sneer; "he guarded the coast "while he was alive; let him continue to guard it after "death." By stealth, however, or by purchase, the royal remains were removed from this unhallowed site, and deposited in the church of Waltham, which Harold had founded before he ascended the throne §.

* Pict. 132—134. Orderic, 182—185. Hunt. 211. Malm. 57

† See Pict. 128. Orderic, 178, and in opposition, Ingulf, 69. Chron. Sax. 172. Flor. 634. Malms. 53.

‡ Baron Maseres has calculated the average weight of the human body at somewhat less than 11,000 guineas. Pict. 138. not.

§ Pictaviensis (135), and Orderic (185), say that he was buried on the beach; most of our historians (Malm. 57. West. 224. Paris, 3), that the body was given to his mother without ransom, and interred by her orders at Waltham. A more romantic story is told by the author of the Waltham MS. in the Cotton library, Jul. D. 6, who wrote about a century afterwards. If we may believe him, two of the canons, Osgod Cnoppe, and Ailric, the childe maister, were sent to be spectators of the battle. They obtained from William, to whom they presented ten marks of gold, permission to search for the body of their benefactor. Unable to distinguish it among

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CHAPTER VII.

ANGLO-SAXONS.

Polity of the Anglo-Saxons—Feudal customs—Ranks in Society—Courts of Law—Crimes—Slaves.

EVERY account of the civil polity of the Anglo-Saxons must necessarily be imperfect. We can only view the subject through the intervening gloom of eight centuries; and the faint light which is furnished by imperfect notices, scattered hints, and partial descriptions, may serve to irritate, but not to satisfy curiosity. It would be in vain to seek for information in the works of foreign writers; and the native historians never imagined that it could be requisite to delineate institutions with which they had been familiarized from their childhood, and which they naturally judged would be perpetuated along with their posterity.

Of the military character and predatory spirit of the Saxons an accurate notion may be formed from the Danish adventurers of the ninth and tenth centuries. Both were scions from the same Gothic stock: but the latter retained for a longer period the native properties of the original plant. Hengist and Cerdic, and their fellow-chieftains, were the sea-kings of their age, animated with the same spirit, and pursuing the same objects as the barbarians, whose ferocity yielded to the

the heaps of the slain, they sent for Harold's mistress, Editha, surnamed "the fair," and the "swan's neck." By her his features were recognised. The corpse was interred at Waltham with regal honours, in the presence of several Norman earls and gentlemen.—Mr. Turner first called the attention of his readers to this MS. Hist. of Eng. i. 60.

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perseverance of Alfred, but subdued the pusillanimity of Ethelred. The reader has only to transfer to the Saxons the Danish system of warfare, its multiplied aggressions, its unquenchable thirst of plunder, and its unprovoked and wanton cruelties, and he will form a correct picture of the state of Britain, from the first defection of Hengist to the final establishment of the octarchy. The adventurers did not think of colonizing the countries which they conquered, till they had become weary of devastation; and then they introduced the institutions to which they had been habituated in their original settlements.

Of these the most important, and that which formed the groundwork of all the rest, may be discovered among the Germans in the age of Tacitus. From him we learn that every chieftain was surrounded by a number of retainers, who did him honour in time of peace, and accompanied him to the field in time of war. To fight by his side they deemed an indispensable duty; to survive his fall, an indelible disgrace *. It was this artificial connexion, this principle which reciprocally bound the lord to his vassal, and the vassal to his lord, that held together the northern hordes, when they issued forth in quest of adventures. They retained it in their new homes; and its consequences were gradually deve loped, as each tribe made successive advances in power and civilization. Hence, in process of time, and by gradual improvements, grew up the feudal system, with its long train of obligations, of homage, suit, service, purveyance, reliefs, wardships, and scutage. That it was introduced into England by the Norman conqueror, is the opinion of respectable writers; and the assertion may be true, if they speak of it only in its mature and most oppressive form. But all the primary germs of the feudal services may be descried among the Saxons, even in the earlier periods of their government; and many of them flourished in full luxuriance long before

* Tac. Germ. 13, 14.

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the extinction of the dynasty. As the subject is interesting, I may be allowed to treat it more in detail.

That the artificial relation between the lord and his man or vassal, was accurately understood, and that its duties were faithfully performed by the Anglo-Saxons, is sufficiently evident from numerous instances in their history. We have seen * that when Cynewulf was surprised in the dead of the night at Merton, his *men* refused to abandon, or even to survive their lord; and when on the next morning the eighty-four followers of Cyneheard were surrounded by a superior force, they also spurned the offer of life and liberty, and chose rather to yield up their breath in a hopeless contest, than to violate the fealty which they had sworn to a murderer and an outlaw †. An attachment of this romantic and generous kind cannot but excite our sympathy. It grew out of the doctrine, that of all the ties which nature has formed or society invented, the most sacred was that which bound the lord and the vassal; whence it was inferred that the breach of so solemn an engagement was a crime of the most disgraceful and unpardonable atrocity. By Alfred it was declared inexpiable: the laws pronounced against the offender the sentence of forfeiture and death ‡.

It was not, however, an institution which provided solely for the advantage of one party. The obligations were reciprocal. The vassal shared with his fellows in the favours of his lord, and lived in security under his protection. It was a contract, cemented by oath, for the benefit of each. "By the lord," said the inferior, placing his hands between those of his chief, "I promise to be "faithful and true; to love all that thou lovest, and "shun all that thou shunnest, conformably to the laws

* See history, p. 140.

† Chron. Sax, anno 750, p. 57

‡ Chron. Sax. 58. Leg. Sax. p. 33, 34, 35. 142, 143. Even the word *vassal* seems to have been known in England as early as the reign of Alfred. Asser, his instructor, calls the thanes of Somerset, nobiles vasi illi Somertunenses plagæ. Asser, 33.

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"of God and man; and never in will or weald (power), "in word or work, to do that which thou loathest, pro- "vided thou hold me as I mean to serve, and fulfil the "conditions to which we agreed when I subjected myself "to thee, and chose thy will *.

This last proviso furnished the usual pretext for the dissolution of these engagements. To it every powerful chieftain appealed as often as he dared to disobey the orders of his sovereign, the "*king-lord*," as he was called, in contradistinction to inferior lords. The sub-vassal, indeed, could not be compelled by the tenour of his oath to bear arms against the head of the state; but he never presumed to doubt the rectitude of his immediate chief, and always accompanied him to the field, whether it were against the enemies, or the sovereign of his country. We are told that Godwin and his sons were "loath to march against their king-lord:" yet their "men" followed them in sufficient numbers to render doubtful the issue of the contest; and on the submission of their leaders were only required to transfer their homage to "the hands" of the king.

It should, however, be observed that the Anglo-Saxon vassals were divided into two classes. Some were vassals by tenure, holding lands under the obligation of following their lord: and these appear to have been numerous: for many of the sons of the noble Saxon had no other inheritance but their swords, and no other profession but that of arms. Those were therefore always ready to accept the offer of lands in return for military service; and were accustomed, if they met with no such offer in their native province, to seek employment among the retainers of some powerful chieftain in the other Saxon kingdoms †. Besides these there were also vas-

* Leg. 401. 50. 63. Bromp. 859.

† See Bede's remarks on the filii nobilium vel emeritorum militum. Ep. ad Egb. Ant. 309. These I take to be the *sithcundmen*, or men of the sith or military profession, so often mentioned in the early laws of the southern kingdoms. Leg. 10. 22. 23. 25.

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sals from choice, men who possessing lands of their own, enjoyed the enviable privilege of choosing their own lords: for it was a maxim of Anglo-Saxon legislation that every man should have a superior answerable for his conduct.* Of both descriptions several notices may be discovered among the relics of Anglo-Saxon antiquity.

Of the manner in which the original adventurers divided among themselves the lands of the natives we can speak from conjecture only; we must wait for the introduction of Christianity before we meet with more certain and written documents. Then it appears that every district in possession of the Saxons had been parcelled out, by measurement or estimation, into folc-lands or famil'y lands,† each allotment being supposed capable of supporting the settler, his family, laborers, herds and flocks. Thus we learn from Eddius and Beda that the Isle of Wight comprised twelve hundred folc-lands, the kingdom of Sussex seven thousand, the kingdom of Mercia, north and south of the Trent, twelve thousand.‡ These folc-lands were divided into estates of inheritance, and loens or benefices. The first were estates in perpetuity, transmissible by descent or will, or sale or gift; and were now called boc-lands, because they were conveyed by bocs or writings, and subject to the conditions expressed in such writings; the others formed a general or national fund, and were allotted as benefices in return for courtly or military services; of course the tenure of such lands was only temporary; they reverted to the

* In Latin they were called commendati. They were common in France (Baluz. capit. 443, 536), and seem to have been very numerous in England. Thus when Alfred bequeaths several of his lands to his son Edward, "he "prays the families at Chedder in Somersetshire to choose Edward on the "same terms, as had formerly been agreed between Alfred and them." (Test. Ælf.) We often find them described in Domesday, as free men, who could go with their lands to whomsoever they pleased. Thus in Kent "doterant ire quolibet cum terris suis Lefstan et Lewin et Eluret et Siret "et duo alii tempore regis Edwardi." Domes. 10. 6. 2. In the Exon survey for the expression "ire quo volebant," is substituted "eligere dominum "secundum voluntatem suam." Fol. 383.

† Terrae familiarum. Bede. passim.

‡ Edd. c. 40. Bed. iii. 24; iv. 13, 16, 19; v. 19.

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original stock on the death, removal, or resignation of the holder. The king, however, could, with the consent of the witan, lawfully convey by charter to a favoured individual any number of folc-lands as an estate of inheritance. In that case the land was said to be booked to him.

At first a broad distinction was drawn between lands booked to the clergy or mass thanes, and lands booked to the laity or woneld thanes. As the former were appointed to the service of God, it was their duty to be employed in offices of charity and devotion; they were consequently forbidden to mingle in the fray of arms, or to shed the blood of their fellow-men. Hence, their lands were exonerated from all secular services; an exemption so valuable that many noblemen purchased it of the king, under pretence of establishing monasteries on their estates. This abuse became so prevalent in Northumbria, that Beda in 750 openly proclaimed his fear that in a short time the country would be left without defence against a foreign enemy; for the sons of the thanes and gesiths were obliged to offer their services to foreign princes, because there remained few lands for their maintenance at home.*

What effect this remonstrance produced we know not; but we find very shortly afterwards the kings of Mercia and Wessex declaring that there are three things from which no boc-land can be exempted, the faesten-geweorc or reparation of fortresses, the bryg-geweorc or construction of bridges, and the fyrd-faerelde, or military and naval service.† But about a century later Ethelwulf granted a partial indulgence by enfranchising entirely a tenth part of the boc-lands, belonging not only to the church, but also to the laity.‡

But these three were not the only burthens to which

* Bed. op. Min. ii. 217, 218.
† Cod. Dipl. i. 120, 204, 243.
‡ Ministris nortris. Cod. Dip. ii. 51, 52. Laicis miseris (an error for ministris). Ibid ii. 56. Malms. i. 170.

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boc-lands were subject. Unless exemptions were granted by the charters, these lands were still bound to render many of the same services which they rendered as folc-lands. From the tenor of several enfranchisements, it appears that such services were payments in kind to the king out of the produce of the land and waters; contributions of provisions for the royal household when the king chanced to be in the neighbourhood, or at certain specified times in the course of the year; the obligation of supplying board, lodgings, and carriages for his officers, and for messengers either to him or from him; of maintaining his horses, hounds,* hawks, and also their keepers; of furnishing timber and workmen toward the repair or rebuilding of his villa, and of granting a livelihood to persons demanding it under his warrant, besides the payment of yearly gufolo and rents, and of bots or compensations arising out of the fines levied on offenders. These appear to have been exacted according to the custom of the district; and not by the king only, but also in a limited degree by the ealdorman of the district, who in case of enfranchisement often received a pecuniary compensation for his consent.†

In what manner military service for lands was originally regulated, it is impossible to discover: at a later period it was fixed on the basis of immemorial usage, which appears from Domesday to have varied in almost every county and borough. Perhaps we shall not recede far from the truth, if we judge of the rest of the kingdom from Berkshire, in which we learn that one *miles* was furnished for every five hides of land; that he served during two months; and that, if his own possessions did not amount to the legal quantity, he received pay at the rate of four shillings to the hide from the other proprietors. It may be observed that the same number of hides was required by the law

* See Cod. Dipl. i. 120, 204, 254, 270, 272 313; ii. 30, 60.
† Ibid i. 315; ii. 31, 411.

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for the dignity of thane, who by the Norman compilers of Domesday is called, in their feudal language, miles regis dominicus.

The performance of these services was enforced by numerous enactments in the laws of the Saxon kings from the time of Ina (700) to the reign of Canute (1030) On some occasions the defaulter was punished with the forfeiture of his lands, on others with the payment of a stated fine. In Worcestershire if he were a vassal by choice, his real property was placed at the mercy of the king; if the tenant of another, his lord was bound to find a substitute, or pay a fine of forty shillings, with power to levy the expense on the defaulter. The burghers of Oxford were at liberty to send twenty soldiers, or to pay twenty pounds; at Warwick whoever disobeyed the summons, was mulcted one hundred shillings; in Colchester every house paid sixpence in lieu of all military service. In these and numerous other instances of a similar description, we may easily recognise the rudiments of the prestation, called scutage by the Norman feudalists.*

The king appears to have claimed the power, not only of disposing of the benefice or fee after the death of the tenant, but also of controlling the distribution of his other possessions. Hence the vassal in his will was always anxious to obtain the confirmation of his superior, and to make provision for the payment of what was termed by the Saxons the *heriot*, by the Normans the *relief*.† Of both these practices we meet with numerous instances. Thus Elfhelm, after leaving his heriot to the king, concludes his will in these words: "And "now I beseech thee, my beloved lord, that my last "testament may stand, and that thou do not permit it to

* Leg. 23, 135. Domesday, passim.

† Though Bracton makes a distinction between them, the laws more ancient than Bracton make none. Compare Leg. Sax. 144 with 223. By the Conqueror it was decreed that the relief should be paid out of the chattels of the deceased. The relief of the vavasor is the best horse which the tenant had *on the day of his death*: a jour de sa mort. Ibid.

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" be annulled. God is my witness that I was always obe-
" dient to thy father, faithful to him, both in mind and
" might, and ever true and loving to thee.* " So also archbishop Ælfric first " bequeaths to his lord his best " ship, and the sail-yards thereto, and sixty helmets, and " sixty coats of mail," and then wills, *if it were his lord's will*, &c.† By the laws it was provided that the heriot should be paid within twelve months from the death of the last possessor; and was apportioned to the rank which he bore in the state. That of an earl was four horses saddled, four unsaddled, four helmets, four coats of mail, eight spears, eight shields, four swords, and one hundred mancuses of gold: of a king's thane one half of the last: of an inferior thane his horse, and his arms, with an offer of his hounds or hawks. If he died intestate, the payment of the heriot preserved the estate in his family: if he fell in battle for his lord, the heriot was remitted‡.

There is reason to believe that the Saxon like the Norman kings (and their example was probably imitated by the inferior lords) claimed occasionally the wardship of heiresses, and disposed of them in marriage§. The laws, though their language is not sufficiently explicit, seem to allude to such a custom. They provide

* Lye, App. ii.

† Mores's Ælfric, 62. Yet, as passages of this kind are not general in wills, I am inclined to think that they were nothing more than petitions for the king's protection, if any attempt were made to set the will aside. Æthelstan, indeed, asked and obtained the consent of king Ethelred that he might dispose by will of his property: but he was the king's son, and that very circumstance may take his case out of the general rule. Yet even he, after this consent, prefers a petition to the witan " for their aid that his will may stand." — Lye, App. No. 6.

‡ Leg. 144, 223, 245. It has been said that heriots were introduced by Canute, because they are not mentioned in the laws of his predecessors. But he seems merely to record an ancient custom. They are noticed as such under Edgar (Hist. Elien. 480), and Elfhelm, whose heriot has been already mentioned, lived many years before Ethelred. Longo retroacto tempore. Ibid. 498. Edgar himself describes them as an ancient institution in the charter, in which he frees the monasteries from the obligation. " Solitus census, quem indigenæ Heritua usualiter vocitant, qui pro hujus " patriæ potentibus post obitum regibus dari solet." Seldeni, Spirileg. ad Eadm. p. 153.

§ Leg. 144, 145. Hist. Rames. 403, 441.

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that no maid or widow shall be compelled to marry against her will, and very inconsistently forbid the female to be sold in marriage, while they allow a present to be accepted from her husband*. This custom prevailed also in the royal burghs. In Shrewsbury no woman could marry without a licence from the king. With her first husband she paid a fine of ten shillings: if she took a second, the sum was doubled†.

From the tenures of land we may pass to the distinction of ranks, and the administration of justice. With a few shades of accidental difference both these were substantially the same in all the nations of Gothic origin. Among the Anglo-Saxons the free population was divided into the eorl and ceorl, the men of noble and ignoble descent‡. The former were said to be ethel-born: and with a people acknowledging no other merit than martial prowess, it is probable that this distinction attached to those only whose fathers had never exercised the occupations of husbandry or of the mechanical arts. It was merely personal: it conferred neither property nor power but it served to gratify pride; and numerous complaints attest the arrogance with which the noble Saxon looked down on his inferior, and the reluctance with which "the full-born" bore the superiority of the "less-born," whom merit or favour had raised above them§. The termination *ing* added to the name of the progenitor designated his posterity. The Uffingas were the descendants of Uffa, the Oiscingas the descendants of Oisc‖. But the more lofty title of etheling, the son of the noble, was reserved for the members of the reigning family; and these in each of the Saxon dynasties pretended to derive their pedigree

* Leg. 109. 122. 144. 145.

† Domesday, Scropescire, and a forfeiture is mentioned in Norfolk, because the woman who held the property married within a year after the death of her husband.—General Introduction, vol. iii, by Mr. Ellis.

‡ By not attending to this meaning of the word eorl, and rendering it earl, the translators of the Saxon laws have made several passages unintelligible. See Leg. 3. 35. 65.

§ Leg. 83 111. Bed. 296. ‖ Bed. ii. 5. 15.

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from Woden, a real or fabulous conqueror, who was adored by his votaries as the god of battles. The supposed divinity of their parent secured to them the veneration of their pagan followers; and when Christianity had dissipated the illusion, the superiority of their earthly descent was still acknowledged by all their contemporaries*.

Among the ethel-born the first place was occupied by the cyning or king†. In the succession to the crown the reader must have observed occasional deviations from the direct line of hereditary descent. The causes have been already explained: but whether the new monarch were the immediate or the collateral heir of his predecessor, the consent of the witan always preceded his coronation. Hence the original writers, whose language is the best evidence of the sentiments prevailing among their contemporaries, usually speak of their kings as elected to the throne. The cyning was the lord of the principal chieftains, and through them of their respective vassals. As his estates were nearly equal to theirs all together, so was his annual revenue and the number of his thanes: forming in the aggregate a power sufficient to humble the proudest, or to reduce the most factious of his subjects. Thrice in the year the great tenants of the crown were reminded of their dependence. At the festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide they were summoned to pay him their homage. They appeared before him in the guise of dependants while he was seated on his throne with the crown on his head, and a sceptre in each hand. During eight days they were feasted at his expense, and on their dismissal received presents from his bounty‡. He exer-

* Chron. Sax. 13. 15. Gale, iii. 134. Voden, de cujus stirpe multarum provinciarum regium genus originem duxit. Bed. i. 15.

† The etymology of this word has been much disputed. As from *thuda people*, the Teutones formed *thiudans, the chief of the people*, I see no reason why from *cyne*, or *kun, a race*, might not be formed *cyning*, the *chief of the race*.

‡ Chron. Sax. 163. Hist. Ram. 395. Sceptris simul et coronâ. Ailred, Riev. 398. Regalia instrumenta sustinuit. Id. 399.

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cised an undisputed authority over the national forces by sea and land. He was the supreme judge; and was accustomed to receive appeals from every court of judicature. Of the fines which were levied on offenders the principal portion was paid into his treasury: he could commute the punishment of death, and was accustomed to liberate a prisoner in every burgh and jurisdiction into which he entered. His "peace" or protection secured the man to whom it was granted from the pursuit of his enemies. At his coronation, and for eight days afterwards, it was extended to the whole kingdom: each year it was equally observed during the octaves of the three great festivals, in which he was accustomed to hold his court; and at all times it was enjoyed by every person within the circuit of four miles from his actual residence, by travellers on the four highways, and by merchants or their servants, as long as they were employed on the navigable rivers. Some infractions of this peace subjected the offender to a heavy amercement: others of a more heinous description placed his life and property at the mercy of the king.*

Though there is no direct proof that any lands were appropriated to the crown, yet it can hardly be doubted; for the king always appears as the greatest landholder in the kingdom. Thus, taking the county of Kent as a sam-

* Leg. 63. 199. The real distance to which the king's peace extended from his actual residence was whimsically fixed at three miles, three furlongs, three roods, nine feet, nine hands (inches?), and nine barley corns. Leg. 63. The object of this institution, as also of another called "the "peace of God," was to diminish the number of outrages perpetrated under the pretext of retaliation. The latter is said to have been first established in Aquitain, about the year 1032: though its rudiments appear in the decrees of several councils before the close of the tenth century (Bouquet x. 49. 147); and it is enforced in the laws of king Ethelred at the beginning of the eleventh (Leg. 108, 109). In England it included the Ember days, Advent, Lent the vigils, and festivals of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, and of All Saints, and every Sunday, reckoning from the hour of nine on Saturday to the dawn of light on the Monday morning (Leg 108. 109. 121. 197). In France it began every week on the evening of the Wednesday, and lasted till the Monday (Glaber apud Du Cange in voce Treva). During these days it was forbidden, under severe penalties, for any man to slay, maim, or assault his enemy, or to distrain or plunder his lands. Ut nullus homo alium assaliat, aut

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ple, we find from Domesday that out of four hundred and thirty places described as lying within its precincts, not fewer than one hundred and ninety-four, nearly one-half, belonged to Edward the Confessor; and the remainder was unequally divided among the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Rochester, the two abbots of St. Austin's and St. Martin's, the queen Editha, the earls Godwin, Harold and Lewin, Alnod child, Brixi child, and Sbern Biga. These eleven were the great tenants in chief, the king's principal thanes, the real peers of the county. But, besides the property and privileges which they claimed in that capacity, most of them were in possession of parcels of land which they held in common with many inferior thanes, as sub-tenants; some under the crown, some under its immediate vassals, thus pointing out, by the difference of their tenures, what originally was the king's demesne, and what was the demesne of the great lords in whose places they now stood.*

The consort of the cyning was originally known by the appellation of "queen," and shared in common with her husband the splendour of royalty. But of this distinction she was deprived by the crime of Eadburga, the daughter of Offa, who had administered poison to her husband Brihtric, king of Wessex. In the paroxysm of their indignation the witan punished the unoffending wives of their future monarchs by abolishing with the title of queen all the appendages of female royalty. Ethelwulf, in his old age, ventured to despise the prejudices of his subjects. His young consort, Judith, was crowned in France, and was permitted to seat herself by his side on the throne.† There is no satisfactory proof

vulneret, aut occidat, nullus namium aut prædam capiat. Order. Vit. anno 1096.

* See Hursham's Summary Table of Lands in Kent, compiled from the autograph of Domesday. It is observable that the conqueror, when he distributed the county among his followers, still kept up the same number of eleven tenants in chief. Ibid. p. 20.

† Asser, 10.

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of any such coronation after Judith; and though the title of Regina is occasionally given to the king's wife by Latin writers, she is generally termed "the lady,"* in Anglo-Saxon instruments.† But whatever were the legitimate honours of the queen she could not be deprived of the influence which was naturally attached to her situation; and no one presumed to solicit a favour from the monarch without offering a present to his wife.‡ From several passages it appears that separate estates were allotted for the support not only of the queen but also of her children, and the princes of the blood.

After the royal family the highest order in the state was that of the ealdormen or earls. From the nature of their office they were sometimes styled viceroys:§ by Bede they are dignified with the title of princes and satraps.‖ The districts which they governed in the name of the king, were denominated their shires, confined originally to a small tract of country, but gradually enlarged to the extent of our present counties. The policy of the West-Saxon kings, after the subjugation of the neighbouring states, still added to their authority by comprising several shires within the same earldom. Thus the whole kingdom of Mercia was intrusted by Alfred to the administration of the ealdorman Ethered:¶ that of Northumbria by Edgar to the fidelity of the earl Osulf.** It was the duty

* Chron. Sax. 132, 164, 165, 168. A letter in Mores's Ælfric begins thus: "Wolstan archbishop greets Canute king his lord, and Ælfgiva *the lady*," p. 104. She gives herself the same title. "I Ælfgiva *the lady*, king Edward's mother." Ibid. 98. In one charter Edgar's queen designates herself by the singular expression; ego Alfthryth præfati regis conlaterana. Bed. App. 777.

† I am aware of the passage in the Laud MS. of the Chronicle (anno 1048) respecting the wife of Edward the Confessor, but do not think it conclusive.

‡ Gale, iii. 457. Hicks. Dissert. 51.

§ Subregali. Bed. App. 765—767.

‖ Principes, Satrapæ, Primates, Optimates, Duces. All these titles are rendered by Alfred ealdormen.

¶ Asser, 50, 52.

** Malmsb. 148.

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of the ealdorman, as the representative of the monarch, to lead the men of his shire to battle; to preside with the bishop in the courts of the county; and to enforce the execution of justice.* Of the fines and rents paid to the king within his jurisdiction he appears to have received one-third.† This office was originally in the gift of the crown, and might be forfeited by misconduct: but it was so frequently continued in the same family, that at last, instead of being solicited as a favour, it began to be claimed as a right.‡ At the accession of Canute the word jarl (or earl) was substituted for ealdorman; perhaps, because among the Danes the latter appellation was common to all those who were called the king's thanes, or greater thanes, by the Anglo-Saxons.§

In the more ancient writers we meet also with a class of men, denominated the king's gesiths in their own language, and his comites or socii in the Latin documents. By Bede the comites are always distinguished from the milites, and by King Alfred, the translator of Bede, the first are termed gesiths, the others thanes. Many of these gesiths were of the first families in the nation:‖ and it would appear from their appellation, that they were bound to wait on the king in his court, or to accompany him in his journeys.¶ We meet with no mention of them after the reign of Alfred.

* Chron. Sax. 78. Leg. 78, 136.

† Domesday, Huntedunscire, Snotinghamscire.

‡ Chron. Sax. 169, 170.

§ Canute tells us (see constitut. de Faerta, Thorpe i. 426) that the greater thanes were called ealdormen, the lesser young men; — juniores in the charters.

‖ Beda (iii. 22) mentions two gesiths as kinsmen of the prince. Kent was governed by Eghalch the gesith. Text. Roff. 76. Æthelric calls himself subregulus et *comes* gloriosissimi regis Æthebaldi (Bed. App. 784), and is called by Æthebald reverentissimus *comes meus* mihique satis carus, filius quondam. Hujcciorum regis osheres. — Cod. Dipl. i. 100.

¶ *Sith*, a journey, or expedition.

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We also meet with the titles of "heretoch and hold," denoting military commands of importance: and of "child," which has been conceived to mean the principal thane of a particular district. But the real rank and powers of these officers have not been satisfactorily ascertained *.

The thanes, so called from *thegnian* to serve, were a numerous and distinguished order of men, divided into several classes of different rank, and with different privileges. We read of greater and lesser thanes: of the thanes of the king, and the thanes of ealdormen and prelates. The heriot of the higher was fourfold that of the lower thane: and while the former acknowledged no other superior than the king, the latter owed suit to the court of his immediate lord †. It is certain that they held their lands by the honourable tenure of service about the person of their lord or in the field. Milites is the term by which they are usually designated in the Norman writers: and every expression in Bede denoting a military character is invariably rendered thane by his royal translator ‡. The law required, one combatant from every five hides of land; and the acquisition of property to the same extent was sufficient to raise a ceorl to the rank of a thane §. But without it, though he might accompany the king to the field, though he should possess a helmet, a coat of mail, and a golden-hilted sword, he was still condemned to remain in the subordinate and humble condition of a ceorl. A politic exception was admitted in favour of the merchants, who

* We read of Wulfnoth, who was father of earl Godwin, and child of Sussex (Chron. Sax. 137), of Edric child in Herefordshire (Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1067), Alfric child in East-Anglia (Hist. Elien. 470), Alnod child in Kent, Brixi child in Kent (Domesday, Chenth). I suspect the appellation merely denotes a person, who from his childhood was heir apparent to some high office. It was given to Edwy before his accession to the crown (Lye, App. iv.), and to Edgar Etheling, who, as he never became king, retained it during the whole reign of William the Conqueror. Chron. Sax. 173. 182. Chron. Lamb. ad ann. 1068. 1075. It was something like the present Spanish title of "Infant."

† Leg. 47. 118. 144. Domes. Worcester. 172.

‡ Bed. iii. 14 iv. 13. v. 13. § Leg 70.

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were accustomed to form companies or gilds, and possessed their lands in common. To sail thrice to a foreign land with a cargo of his own wares, entitled the merchant to the rank and privileges of the thaneship *. Of these privileges the most valuable was the amount of the *were*, an advantage, which will be more fully explained hereafter.

The gerefas or reeves were officers of high importance appointed by the king and the great proprietors in their respective demesnes. They were to be found in every separate jurisdiction: but the principal were the reeves of the shires, ports, and boroughs. It was their duty to collect the tolls, to apprehend malefactors, to require sureties, to receive the rents, and on several occasions to act in the place of their lords †. They were assessors, sometimes the chief judges in different courts; and were commanded under a severe penalty to regulate their decisions by the directions of the doom-book ‡.

The foregoing were *ethel-born*: the *unethel*, the tradesmen, mechanics, husbandmen and labourers, were comprehended under the generic denomination of *ceorles*. Of these there were two classes. The superior class consisted of *socmen*, or free ceorles, who held lands by conventional services, or chose their own lords, or possessed the right of disposing of their real estates by sale, or will, or donation. The others were attached to the soil, as part and parcel of the manor, transferable with it from one lord to another, bound to give their personal labour in return for the land which they cultivated for their own use, and liable to be punished as runaways if they withdrew out of the manorial jurisdiction under which they were born §. They had indeed certain rights

* Leg. 71. These regulations have been attributed to Athelstan, but the text describes them as the ancient customs of the nation. It is to them that we are to attribute the title of barons given to the merchants of London and the cinque ports.

† Leg. 9. 12. 43. 69. ‡ Leg. 48.

§ In the Bolden Book may be seen innumerable instances of the difference between the rent and services of these two classes. Both paid partly in kind, partly in money, and partly in labour: but the free tenant

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ecognised by the law; and could not in many places be dispossessed, as long as they performed their customary services: but then these services were often uncertain in amount, depending on the will of the lord; he could tallage, or tax them at discretion; he exacted from them the *mercheta* or *gersume*, a fine for the marriage of their daughters and sisters, and did not permit them to sell their cattle out of the manor, till they had purchased the permission in his court. Traces of all these customs may be found in the remains of Anglo-Saxon antiquity, and their previous existence is proved by the decisions in the courts of law during the Norman period, when exemption from these servile burthens was admitted as incontrovertible evidence of free tenantcy *.

Among a people but lately emerged from barbarism the administration of justice is always rude and simple: and though the absence of legal forms and pleading may casually insure a prompt and equitable decision, it is difficult without their aid to oppose the arts of intrigue and falsehood, or the influence of passion and prejudice. The proceedings before the Anglo-Saxon tribunals would not have suited a more advanced state of civilization: they were ill calculated to elicit truth, or to produce conviction: and in many instances which have been recorded by contemporary writers, our more correct or more artificial notions will be shocked at the credulity or the precipitancy of the judges. The subject, however,

worked only a fixed number of days for the lord in seed-time and during the harvest: the other worked in addition three days in the week during the whole year, with the exception of a fortnight at Christmas, and a week at the festivals of Easter and Whitsuntide. The services of mechanics were regulated in the same manner.

* See Abbrev. Placit. 57. Norf. rot. 1. 2—95. North. rot. 1—147. Suth. rot. 9—161. Leyces. rot. 6. et passim. We meet also with cotsets, coterells, cotmen, or cottagers (qui cotagia et curtilegia tenent. Stat. 1. 243), who, as their holdings were small, rendered a smaller portion of labour, that is, in the Bolden book, two days in the week from Lammas to Martinmas, and one only during the rest of the year. There were also *borders*, whose services were few, but multum servilia. Abb. Plac. 211. Kent. rot. 19. *Boads* appear to have been the masters of families among the second class of ceorles. If a sufficient number of free tenants could not be procured to form a jury, the deficiency was supplied from among the most discreet and lawful boads. Stat. i. 227.

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is curious and interesting. These ancient courts still exist under different names: and the intelligent observer may discover in their proceedings the origin of several institutions, which now mark the administration of justice in the English tribunals.

The lowest species of jurisdiction known among the Anglo-Saxons was that of "Sac and Soc," words, the derivation of which has puzzled the ingenuity of antiquaries, though the meaning is sufficiently understood. It was the privilege of holding pleas and imposing fines within a certain district, and with a few variations was perpetuated in the manorial courts of the Norman dynasty. It seems to have been claimed and exercised by all the greater and by several of the lesser thanes: but was differently modified by the terms of the original grant, or by immemorial usage. Some took cognizance of all crimes committed within their soke; the jurisdiction of others was confined to offences of a particular description; some might summon every delinquent, whether native or stranger, before their tribunal: while others could inflict punishment on none but their own tenants. From the custom of holding these courts in the hall of the lord, they were usually termed the hall-motes *.

Superior to the hall-mote was the mote of the hundred, a large division of the county. It was assembled every month under the presidency of the ealdorman or chief officer of the hundred, accompanied by the principal clergymen, freeholders, and the reeve and four men as representatives from each township. Once in the year was convened an extraordinary meeting, when every male above the age of twelve was compelled to attend; the state of the gilds and tythings (or associations of ten families) was

* Leg. 241, 242. 256. Hist. Elien. 490. 501. Domesday, passim. These courts absorbed much of the business, which would otherwise have been carried before the courts of the hundred and county, and from them are derived our present courts baron with civil, and *courts leet* with criminal, jurisdiction.

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ascertained; and no man was permitted to remain at large, who could not provide a surety for his peaceable demeanour. In these courts offenders were tried, and civil causes decided. But their utility was not confined to their judicial proceedings. In a period when few possessed the humble acquirements of reading and writing, the stability of pecuniary transactions was principally dependent on the honesty and character of the witnesses; and the testimony of the hundred was deemed on that account conclusive in questions of litigated right or disputed obligation. Hence men frequented these meetings in the course of private business; and contracts were made, exchanges ratified, purchases completed, and moneys paid, in the presence of the court But sometimes, when interests of greater importance were at stake, or the parties belonged to different districts, the authority of a single hundred was thought insufficient. On such occasions, that the controversy might be brought before a more numerous and less partial tribunal, the ealdorman convoked an assembly of the contiguous hundreds, or of the third part of the county. The former was termed the court of the lathe, and the latter of the trything *.

Of still higher dignity and more extensive jurisdiction was the shire-mote, or court of the county. It was held twice in the year, in the beginning of May and October. Every great proprietor was compelled to attend, either in person or by his steward, or to send in his place his chaplain, bailiff, and four principal tenants. The bishop and ealdorman, or earl, presided with equal authority, and their assessors were the sheriff and the most noble of the royal thanes. In their proceedings they began with those causes which related to the dues and immu-

* Leg. 50. 60. 78. 117. 203. 204, 205. 240. Hist. Elien. 473. 475. 484. The lathes still exist in some of the southern counties, where the hundreds were small. From the trythings is supposed to be derived the local denomination of riding, the third part of a county. In burghs were held burghmotes, corresponding with the motes of the hundred. Leg. Sax. 78.

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nities of the church; passed to the fines and forfeitures belonging to the crown; and ended with the controversies of individuals. In the last case it was the duty of the court to attempt a reconciliation by proposing a compromise; or, if the proposal were rejected, to pronounce a definitive judgment*. It was also on these occasions that the laws were recited, which had been enacted in the great council of the nation. We have still extant a letter to king Athelstan from the members of a county court, the bishops, the thanes, and the men of Kent, who recapitulate the laws which he had notified to them, promise obedience, and conclude with the most forcible expressions of attachment to his person†.

That the shires and hundreds, with their respective courts, were originally established by the policy of Alfred, is asserted by a well-informed writer, who lived at the time of the Norman conquest‡. There is, however, reason to doubt much, if not the whole, of his statement. Alfred might improve, but he certainly could not invent, a system which existed some centuries before his reign. 1. The division of *shires* was common to all the northern nations §: some are known to have existed in England under their present names since the first settlement of the Saxons ‖: and others are mentioned in the laws and by the writers prior to the supposed division by Alfred ¶. The great inequality in their measurement, and the great irregularity in their distribution, prove that they were not the uniform work of one monarch. but that they owe their origin to different princes, who divided the country as necessity might require, or policy might suggest. 2. The hundreds also appear to have been a

* Leg. 78. 204, 205. 210.

† Bromp. 850. The decisions of the witan in civil causes were also sent to the shire-mote. Hist. Elien. 469.

‡ Ingulf. 28. He has been followed by Malmsbury and others.

§ Baluze, capit. i. 19. 39. 103. ‖ Kent, Sussex, Essex.

¶ Leg. 16. 20, 21. Chron. Sax. 56. 74, 75. 78 Asser, 3. 8. 14. Asser was the contemporary and instructor of the king. It is evident from his silence that he was ignorant of any new institution of shires or hundreds.

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continental institution. From Tacitus we learn that the Germans of his age divided their territories into pagi; that each pagus furnished a band of one hundred combatants for battle: and that each band was termed "the "hundred of the pagus" by which it was furnished *. Whether in the establishment of hundreds the Saxons followed this or any other particular rule, is uncertain It has been supposed that the name was given to the district occupied by a hundred families of freemen. This hypothesis has been generally admitted, because it satisfies the mind, and spares the trouble of ulterior investigation: but it will appear very questionable to those who have examined the notices in Domesday, and compared the disproportionate limits of even neighbouring hundreds †.

Ingulf has also attributed to Alfred the institution of tythings, which by the very name import either a subdivision of the hundred, or an association of ten neighbouring families. By law every freeman was to be enrolled in one of these associations, all the members of which were made perpetual bail for each other. If one of the number fled from justice, the remaining nine were allowed the respite of a month to discover the fugitive: when, if he were not forthcoming, the pecuniary penalty of his crime was levied on his goods, and, in case of deficiency, on the goods of the tything, unless it could

* Tac. Germ. VI.

† Hundredus continet centum villas. Bromp. 956. It is plain from Bede that villa, which his translator always renders *tune*, comprehended not only the mansion of the proprietor, but also the cottages of his tenants and slaves. Whitaker maintains that ten of these townships formed a tything or manor, and ten manors a hundred. Whit. Manchester, ii. 114—120. But it will be difficult to reconcile this opinion with the statements in Domesday. I will take for example the hundreds in the lathe of Sutton in Kent. All the others are similar.

Hundreds.	Sowlings.	Acres of Meadow.	Manors.
Greenwich	8¼	131	9
Lesnes	19¼	52	4
Bromley	8	14	2
Rokesley	27¼	78	14
Axtane	65½	476	36
Westerham	4¼	16	2

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be proved that its members had not connived at his escape *.

From these local courts, the hall-mote, the hundred-mote, and the shire-mote, appeals were allowed to the superior authority of the monarch. Alfred was accustomed to inspect the minutes of their proceedings, to confirm or annul their decisions, and occasionally to punish the judges for their partiality or ignorance. By his office the king was the supreme magistrate in the state: but he had other duties to perform; and it was forbidden to bring any cause before him, till it had been previously submitted to the decision of the inferior judges. This prohibition was, however, frequently disregarded; and few princes refused to exercise their judicial functions, as often as they were solicited by a favourite, or tempted by a present. Wherever the king was present, a court might be speedily assembled. To the thanes and clergymen who attended on his person, he added the prelates and nobility of the neighbourhood, and with their assistance either pacified the parties, or pronounced a definitive judgment. But these occasional courts, respectable as they might be, were eclipsed by the superior splendour and dignity of the "mickle synoths or "witena-gemots," the great meetings, or assemblies of the counsellors, which were regularly convened at the festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, and occasionally, at other times, as difficult circumstances or sudden exigencies might require. Who were the constituent members of this supreme tribunal, has long been a subject of debate; and the dissertations, to which it has given rise, have only contributed to involve it in greater obscurity. It has been pretended that not only the military tenants had a right to be present, but that the ceorls also attended by their representatives, the borsholders of the tythings. The latter part of the assertion has been made without a shadow of evidence, and

* Leg. Sax. 136. 201, 202. 241.

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the former is built on very fallacious grounds. It is indeed probable that, in the infancy of the Anglo-Saxon states, most of the military retainers may have attended the public councils: yet even then the deliberations were confined to the chieftains; and nothing remained for the vassals but to applaud the determination of their lords. But in later times, when the several principalities were united into one monarchy, the recurrence of these assemblies, thrice in every year within the short space of six months, would have been an insupportable burthen to the lesser proprietors; and there is reason to suspect that the greater attended only when it was required by the importance of events, or by the vicinity of the court. The principal members seem to have been the spiritual and temporal thanes, who held immediately of the crown, and who could command the services of military vassals. It was necessary that the king should obtain the assent of these to all legislative enactments: because without their acquiescence and support it was impossible to carry them into execution. To many charters we have the signatures of the witan. They seldom exceed thirty in number; they never amount to sixty. They include the names of the king and his sons, of a few bishops and abbots, of nearly an equal number of ealdormen and thanes, and occasionally of the queen, and of one or two abbesses *. Others, the fideles or vassals, who had accompanied their lords, are mentioned as looking on and applauding: but there exists no proof whatever, that they enjoyed any share in the deliberations †.

The legal powers of this assembly have never been accurately ascertained: probably they were never fully defined. To them, on the vacancy of the crown, belonged

* See Ingulf, 32. 44, 45. Gale, iii. 517. Hemingford passim. From a passage in the history of Ely (p. 513), it has been inferred that an estate of forty hides entitled its possessor to a seat in the witan.

† Præsentibus archiepiscopis et episcopis, Angliæ universis, nec non Beorredo rege Merciæ, et Edmundo Estanglorum rege, abbatum et abbatissarum, ducum, comitum, procerumque totius terræ, aliorumque *fidelium* infinita multitudine, qui omnes regium chirographum laudaverunt, dignitates vero sua nomina subscripserunt. Ing. 17.

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the choice of the next sovereign: and we find them exercising this claim not only at the decease of each king, but even during the absence of Ethelred in Normandy. They compelled him to enter into a solemn compact with the nation, before they would acknowledge him a second time for king of England *. In ordinary cases their deliberations were held in the presence of the sovereign; and, as individually they were his vassals, as they had sworn "to love what he loved, and shun "what he shunned," there can be little doubt that they generally acquiesced in his wishes. In the preambles to the Saxon laws the king sometimes assumes a lofty strain. *He* decrees: the witan give their advice. He denominates himself the sovereign: they are *his* bishops, *his* ealdormen, *his* thanes. But on other occasions this style of royalty disappears, and the legislative enactments are attributed to the witan in conjunction with the king †. The same diversity appears in treaties concluded with foreign powers. Some bear only the name of the king: in others the witan are introduced as sanctioning the instrument by their concurrence ‡. In their judicial capacity they compromised or decided civil controversies among themselves; summoned before them state criminals of great power and connexions; and usually pronounced the sentence of forfeiture and outlawry against those whom they found guilty §. As legislators they undertook to provide for the defence of the realm, the prevention and punishment of crimes, and the due administration of justice ||.

In all these tribunals the judges were the free tenants, owing suit to the court, and afterwards called its peers. But the real authority seems to have resided in the president, and the principal of his assessors, whose opinion was generally echoed and applauded by the rest of the members.¶ Their proceedings were simplified and faci-

* Chron. Sax. 145.
† Leg. 14, 34, 48, 73, 102, 113.
‡ Leg. 47, 51, 104. Chron. Sax. 132.
§ Chron. Sax. 164, 194.
‖ Ingulf. 10, 16. Chron. Sax. 126, 130, 165.
¶ Qui liberas in eis terras habent, per quos debent causæ singulorum alterna prosecutione tractari. Leg. Sax. 248. If the judges differ in opi-

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litated by a custom, which has already been mentioned. In all cases in which property, whether real or personal, was concerned: if a man claimed by gift or purchase; if stolen goods were found in his possession, or he had forcibly entered on the lands of others; he was bound to produce the testimony of the court and witnesses, before whom the transaction, on which he grounded his own right, must, if it had been lawful, have taken place. On this testimony in civil actions the judges frequently decided; but if either party advanced assertions of such a nature that they could not be proved by evidence, he was put on his oath, and was ordered to bring forward certain freeholders, his neighbours, acquainted with his character and concerns, who should swear that, in their consciences, they believed his assertion to be true. The number of these was in many cases fixed by the law, in others left to the discretion of the court. Sometimes four or five sufficed: sometimes forty or fifty were required: occasionally men came forward spontaneously, and offered themselves by hundreds to swear in behalf of a favoured or much injured individual †. But it should be observed that the value of each oath was estimated by the rank and opulence of the individual. The oath of a king's thane was equal to the oaths of six ceorls, the oath of an ealdorman to those of six thanes. The king and the archbishop, as their word was deemed

nion, the decision is in one law left with the majority, in another with those of highest rank. Si in judicio inter pares oriatur dissensio, vincat sententia plurimorum. Ibid. 237.—Vincat sententia meliorum. Ibid. 248. On this subject I do not hesitate to appeal to the treatise called "Leges Henrici primi." Though compiled under the Normans, it gives in reality an account of the Saxon jurisprudence. This is asserted by the author. De his omnibus pleniorem suggerunt ventura (the sequel) notitiam, sicut Edvardi beatissimi principis extitisse temporibus certis indiciis et fida relatione cognovimus, p. 241. The same appears also from the numerous passages which are evidently translations from Saxon laws still extant; whence it is fair to conclude that much of the rest has been drawn from other documents which have perished in the long lapse of seven hundred years.

† Thus a thousand persons offered to swear in behalf of the thane Wolfnoth. Hist. Elien. 479. It was called by the Saxons the lada, by later writers wager of law. How far it is allowed in modern times may be seen in Blackstone, l. iii. c. 22. sec. vi.

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sacred, were exempted from the obligation of swearing; and the same indulgence was sometimes extended to the higher orders of the nobility.* If the matter still remained doubtful, it became usual to select a jury of free tenants, who left the court, deliberated among themselves, and returned a verdict, which decided the question.† On some occasions a time was fixed within which the party was bound to bring forward his jurors. Thus, in a disputed claim between the bishop of Worcester and the clergy of Berkeley, it was decreed by the witan that the bishop, being in actual possession of the land and of the land-books, should be allowed to establish his right by oath; and we find that thirty days later he produced to swear in his favour at Westminster fifty priests, ten deacons and sixty clerks.‡ I will mention an instance in which recourse was had to each mode of proceeding, and judgment was given on grounds, that to us must appear irregular and unsatisfactory. In a court held at Wendlebury, in which the ealdorman Ailwin, and the sheriff Edric presided, an action was brought against the monks of Ramsey, by Alfnoth, for the purpose of recovering the possession of two hides at Stapleford. After much litigation the decision was left to a jury of thirty-six thanes, who were chosen equally by the plaintiff and the defendants. While they were out of court deliberating on their verdict, Alfnoth publicly challenged the monks to prove their claim by oath. The challenge was accepted; but when they were prepared to swear, the ealdorman arose, observed that he was the patron of the abbey, and offered himself to take the oath in its favour. This decided the cause. The court, through respect for its president, was satisfied with his word, adjudged the two hides to the monks, and condemned Alfnoth in the forfeiture of his

* Leg. Sax. 72, 262. Much ridicule has been thrown on this custom: but where inquiry was excluded, it was perhaps wise to attach a greater value to the oaths of persons, who by their rank and opulence were the furthest removed from the ordinary temptations to perjury, and who had more to forfeit, if they should be proved guilty of that crime.

† Hist. Ram. 415, 416. Regist. Roff. 32. May not these juries be considered as the origin of our present juries in civil causes?

‡ Cod. Dipl. i. 276. See another instance in p. 279.

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lands and chattels. By the interest of his friends the latter part of the judgment was revoked, on condition that he would never more disturb the abbey in the possession of Stapleford *.

In criminal prosecutions the proceedings, though grounded on the same principles, were in many respects different. It was ordered by law, that as soon as the hundred-mote was assembled (the same probably held with respect to other similar tribunals), the reeve with the twelve oldest thanes should go out to inquire into all offences committed within the jurisdiction of the court, and should be sworn "not to foresay (present) any one "who was innocent, nor to conceal any one who was guilty †." On their presentment, or the accusation of the prosecutor and his witnesses, the prisoner was frequently condemned: if any doubt existed, his plea of not guilty was admitted, and after his lord had been called upon to speak to his character upon oath, he was at liberty to prove his innocence by the purgation of lada or swearing, or the ordeal or judgment of God. In the purgation by oath, he began by calling on God to witness that he was innocent both in word and work of the crime laid to his charge. He then produced his compurgators, who swore that "they believed his oath to be upright and clean ‡." It was required that these compurgators or jurors should be his neighbours, or resident within the jurisdiction of the court, freeholders who had never been arraigned for theft, nor ever convicted of perjury, and who were now acknowledged for "true men" by all present. Their number differed according to the custom of

* Hist. Ram. 415, 416.

† Leg. Sax. 117. This is evidently the origin of our grand juries. Mr. Reeves, in his valuable history of the English law, says, that the earliest mention of a trial by jury, that bears a near resemblance to that which this proceeding became in after-times, is in the constitution of Clarendon under Henry II., which orders that if nobody appears to accuse an offender before the archdeacon, the sheriff, at the request of the bishop, faciet jurare duodecim legales homines de vicineto, seu de villa, quod inde veritatem secundum conscientiam suam manifestabunt, p. 87. This appears to me to be no more than an inquest resembling that of the Saxon times mentioned in the preceding law of Ethelred. They are accusers or witnesses, not judges.

‡ The oaths are in Wilkins, Leg. Sax. 63, 64.

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the district; and was always increased, if the testimony of the lord were wanting, or had proved unfavourable. They were sometimes appointed by the judges, sometimes drawn by lot, often brought into the court by the party himself, an indulgence which enabled him to rest his fate on the decision of his friends and dependants, whom he might already have prejudiced in his favour. In Wessex he was permitted to choose thirty jurors, of whom fifteen were rejected by the judges: in East-Anglia and Northumbria he produced forty-eight, out of whom twenty-four were appointed by ballot *. If they corroborated his oath by their own in the form established by law, his innocence was acknowledged.

If, on the contrary, recourse was had to the ordeal, pledges were given for the trial, and the time was fixed by the court. As the decision was now left to the Almighty, three days were spent by the accused in fasting and prayer. On the third he was adjured by the priest not to go to the ordeal, if he were conscious of guilt; he was then communicated with these words: "May this "body and blood of Christ be to thee a proof of inno-"cence this day:" after which, he again swore that he was guiltless of the crime of which he had been accused. The ordeals, which were most in use, were those by hot water and fire. For the former a fire was kindled under a caldron in a remote part of the church. At a certain depth below the surface, which was augmented in the absence of a favourable character from the lord, was placed a stone or piece of iron of a certain weight. Strangers were excluded: the accuser and the accused, each attended by twelve friends, proceeded to the spot; and the two parties were arranged in two lines opposite each other. After the litanies had been recited, a per-

* Leg. Sax. 8. 12. 27. 47. 125. 262. 264. At Winchelsea the institution continued in the hundred court as late as the reign of Henry VI. In the leiger-book of the borough, the compurgators are called, like our present juries, the country by whom the prisoner is tried. See the extract in Sir F. Palgrave's Eng. Commonwealth, ii. cxvii.

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son was deputed from each line to examine the caldron, and if they agreed that the water boiled, and the stone was placed at the proper depth, the accused advanced, plunged in his arm, and took out the weight. The priest immediately wrapped a clean linen cloth round the part which was scalded, fixed on it the seal of the church, and opened it again on the third day. If the arm were perfectly healed, the accused was pronounced innocent: if not, he suffered the punishment of his offence. In the ordeal by fire, the same precautions were employed in respect of the number and position of the attendants. Near the fire a space was measured equal to nine of the prisoner's feet, and divided by lines into three equal parts. By the first stood a small stone pillar. At the beginning of the mass a bar of iron of the weight of one or three pounds, was laid on the fire; at the last collect it was taken off, and placed on the pillar. The prisoner immediately grasped it in his hand, made three steps on the lines previously traced on the floor, and threw it down. The treatment of the burn, and the indications of guilt or innocence, were the same as those in the ordeal by hot water*.

Before I dismiss this subject, I may observe that the national manners opposed many obstacles to the impartial administration of justice. The institution of lord and vassal secured to the litigants both abettors and protectors; and the custom of making presents on all occasions, polluted the purity of every tribunal. In criminal prosecutions conviction was generally followed by pecuniary punishments: of which a part, if not the whole,

* Leg. Sax. 26. 27. 53. 61. 131. It is evident from our ancient writers, that many persons established their innocence by these trials, whence it has been inferred that the clergy were in possession of a secret, by which they either prevented, or rapidly cured, the burn. Yet it is difficult to conceive that such a secret, so widely diffused, and so frequently applied, could have escaped the knowledge of judges and legislators, anxious to prevent the commission of crime; or, if it did not, to account for the conduct of such persons in continuing for several centuries to enforce the trial by ordeal for the discovery of guilt, while they knew that the whole process was an imposture.

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was the perquisite of the principal judge, or of the lord of the court. In civil causes the influence of money was employed to retard or accelerate the proceedings, to defeat the upright, or support the iniquitous, claimant. Bribery, under the disguise of presents, found its way to the prince on the throne, as well as to the reeve in his court. When Athelstan the priest was prosecuted for theft and sacrilege by his bishop, he sold an estate at a nominal price to the ealdorman Wulstan, on condition that he would prevent the trial; and when Alfwin, abbot of Ramsey, despaired of protecting the interests of his monastery against the superior influence of Alfric, he gave twenty marks of gold to king Edward, five to queen Editha, for the interposition of the royal authority in his favour *. We repeatedly meet with complaints of the expense and uncertainty of judicial proceedings; and many individuals deemed it more prudent to sit down in silence under their present losses, than to injure themselves still more deeply by purchasing the protection of their friends and judges †.

The crimes to which the Anglo-Saxons were principally addicted, were homicide and theft. Among men of violent passions, often intoxicated, always armed, quarrels, riots, and murders were inevitable; and as long as the laws refused to exact blood for blood, the right of inflicting punishment naturally devolved upon the family of the slain. Hence arose those deadly, and hereditary feuds, which for so many centuries disgraced the legislation, and disturbed the tranquillity, of the European nations. One murder provoked another: the duty of revenge was transmitted as a sacred legacy to posterity; and the chieftains of the same people often regarded each other as more deadly enemies than the very invaders against whom they were arrayed. Of this the reader has already seen a memorable instance in the alternate murders, which for several generations harassed

* Hist. Ram. 457. Hist. Elien. 492. † Ibid. 414. 457 458.

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two of the most powerful families in Northumbria. To an evil so deeply felt, and so loudly lamented, the legislature wanted courage to apply any other remedy than that of pecuniary compensation; the usual expedient of the savage, who has committed homicide, and is reduced to the necessity either of constantly trembling for his own life, or of purchasing with presents the forbearance of his adversary. This inadequate species of atonement had been discovered by Tacitus among the ancient Germans*: it was matured into a complete but singular system by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Every freeman was numbered in one of the three classes termed twyhind, syxhind, and twelfhind. The first comprised the ceorls, the third the royal thanes; under the second were numbered the intermediate orders of society. The *were* of these classes, the legal value of their lives, and legal compensation for their murder, advanced in proportion from two to six, and from six to twelve, hundred shillings. But that of an ealdorman was twice, of an etheling three times, of a king six times the *were* of a royal thane†. To explain the manner in which the *were* was demanded and paid, let us suppose that a thane of the twelfhind class had been murdered. The homicide might, if he pleased, openly brave the resentment of those whose duty it was to revenge the murder: or he might seek to fortify himself against their attempts within the walls of his own house; or he might flee for protection to one of the asylums appointed by the laws. In none of these cases were his enemies permitted to proceed immediately to the work of vengeance. The object of the legislature was to gain time, that the pas-

* Suscipere tam inimicitias seu patris, seu propinqui, quam amicitias necesse est.—Luitur etiam homicidium certo armentorum ac pecorum numero, recipitque satisfactionem universa domus. Tac. Germ. xxi.

† Leg. 53. 64. 71. On account of the progressive rise of the *were*, all above the rank of ceorls were called dear-born. Leg. 20. The *were* was the great privilege of the higher classes. For every offence against them was punished in proportion to their *were*, and in consequence their persons and properties were better secured than those of their inferiors. Leg. 25. 37. 39. 40

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sions might cool, and the parties be reconciled. If he were found in the open air, it was unlawful to put him to death, unless he obstinately refused to surrender. If he shut himself up in his house, it might indeed be surrounded to prevent his escape, but a week must be suffered to elapse before any hostile attempt could be made. If he sought an asylum, the palace of a king, etheling, or archbishop, afforded him a respite of nine days, a consecrated church, and the house of an ealdorman, or bishop, a respite of seven days. Sometimes he preferred to fight, and much innocent blood was shed: for it was the duty of the vassal on such occasions to succour his lord, and of the lord to hasten with his retainers to the aid of his vassal. Sometimes he surrendered himself a captive into the hands of his enemies, who were compelled to keep him unhurt for the space of thirty days. If, during that interval, he could procure sureties for the payment of the *were*, he was set at liberty; otherwise his person and his life were abandoned to the mercy of his captors*. When the *were* was offered, the following was the proceeding according to law. Twelve sureties, of whom eight were paternal and four maternal relatives of the murderer, gave bond for the faithful payment of the mulct; and immediately both parties swore on their arms "to keep the king's "peace" towards each other. After the lapse of three weeks, one hundred and twenty shillings, the healsfang, or price of liberation from captivity, were divided among the father, the sons, and the brothers of the slain. Three weeks later an equal sum, under the name of manbote, was paid to the lord, as a compensation for the loss of his vassal†. After another interval of three weeks the fight-wite, or penalty for fighting, which differed in its amount according to circumstances, was received by the king, or the lord within whose jurisdiction the murder

* Leg. 43, 44. 110.

† The manbote for one of the twyhind class was thirty, of the syxhied, eighty shillings. Leg. 25.

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had been committed. Another delay of twenty-one days was allowed before the first general payment of the *were* to all the relations of the deceased: and then terms were amicably adjusted for the liquidation of the remainder by instalments in money or cattle. When the atonement was completed, the families were reconciled, and all remembrance of the offence was supposed to be obliterated *

Robbery was another species of crime, the constant repetition of which disturbed the peace of society, and bade defiance to the wisdom and severity of the legislature. It prevailed among every order of men. We meet with it in the clergy as well as the laity; among thanes no less than ceorls. These depredators frequently associated in bands. Within the number of seven they were termed in law theofas: above that number but below thirty-six they formed a hlothe: if they were still more numerous, they were denominated an army; and to each of these different designations a different punishment was assigned †. In an open and thinly inhabited country it was easy for plunderers of this description to drive away by stealth, or carry off by force, the cattle from distant farms. To impede the disposal of property which had been stolen in this manner, the legislature encumbered every legal sale with a multiplicity of oaths and forms; and to promote its discovery, offered to the owner every facility, which might enable him to pursue the offenders through the neighbouring counties ‡. But the frequency proves the inutility of these enactments; and from the increasing severity of the punishment we may infer that the evil was stubborn and unconquerable. At first the thief was condemned to make threefold reparation; afterwards to pay the amount of his *were*, or suffer banishment or death: then his property was confiscated to the crown, and his life was placed at the mercy of the king; lastly he was ordered to be put to death without the possibility of pardon, and one-third of his property was given to the king, a second to the gild or tything

* Leg. 53, 54, 75, 269, 270. † Leg. 17. ‡ Leg. 18, 41, 48, 58, 66, 69, 80, 81.

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from which he had stolen, and the remainder to his widow and children*. This severity was however mitigated by Athelstan; and the life of the thief was spared, if he were under the age of fifteen, or had stolen to a less amount than the value of a shilling. Canute abolished the punishment of death altogether. His object was to chastise the offender, but at the same time to allow him time to repent. On the first conviction the thief was condemned to make double reparation to the man whom he had injured, to pay his *were* to the king, and to find sureties for his future behaviour. A repetition of the crime subjected him to the loss of a hand, or a foot, or of both. If he reverted again to his former practices, the incorrigible offender was either scalped, or suffered the loss of his eyes, nose, ears, and upper lip. So strangely blended were lenity and cruelty in the judicial punishments of our ancestors†.

Of the several classes hitherto described as constituting the Anglo-Saxon commonwealth, the most numerous was that of the ceorles attached to the glebe‡. It has been disputed whether they were freemen or slaves: but, give them what denomination you please, the fact is certain, that they could not separate themselves from the spot on which they were born, nor emancipate themselves from the service of the lord, by whom they were owned.§ If ever they acquired the full rights of freemen, they derived the benefit from his wants or his gratitude, prevailing on him to commute for certain the uncertain conditions of their servitude, or to accept a fixed and annual payment in lieu of all other services. There

* Leg. 2, 7, 12, 17, 65. † Leg. 70, 138.

‡ According to the enumeration in Domesday these ceorles under the names of villeins, cottars and bordars, amounted in England to 183,024, whilst the freemen were only 30,005, the slaves 26,552. The burghers, many of whom were ceorles of the same description, were numbered at 17,105. See table at end of first vol. of Sir James Mackintosh's history.

§ They could be transferred at the will of their lord from his manor to the manor of another lord. Thus when Ethelred, dux et patricuis gentis merciorum, gave Readoner to the church of Worcester, to increase the value of the gift, he took, with permission of King Alfred, six men from the royal villa of Bensington, and "booked them with their teans and tudder" (their families and posterity) into Readoran, "for the church of Worcester, as a "perpetual inheritance for ever." Cod. Dipl. ii. 108, 109.

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remains, however, another class of men of still inferior caste, slaves in the full sense of the word, and condemned to suffer the evils of bondage in its most degrading form*. That all the first adventurers were freemen, there can be little doubt: but in the course of their conquests it is probable that they found, it is certain that they made, a great number of slaves. The posterity of these men inherited the lot of their fathers: and their number was continually increased by the free-born Saxons, who had been reduced to the same condition by debt, or had been made captives in war, or had been deprived of liberty in punishment of their crimes, or had spontaneously surrendered it to escape the horrors of want †. The degradation and enslavement of a freeman were performed before a competent number of witnesses. The unhappy man laid on the ground his sword and his lance, the symbols of the free, took up the bill and the goad, the implements of slavery, and falling on his knees, placed his head in token of submission under the hands of his master ‡.

It should, however, be observed, that the hardships of their condition were considerably mitigated by the influence of religion. The bishop was appointed the protector of the slaves within his diocese; and his authority was employed in shielding them from oppression. Their lords were frequently admonished that slave and freeman were of equal value in the eyes of the Almighty;

* Leg. 15. 53. 103. It appears that slaves, no less than freemen, were sureties for the behaviour of each other. In the reign of Athelstan, when the punishment of theft was the most severe, a law was made respecting the offences committed by slaves against others than their masters. A man thief was ordered to be stoned to death by twenty of his fellows, each of whom was punished with three whippings, if he failed thrice to hit the culprit. A woman thief was burnt by eighty women slaves, each of whom brought three billets of wood to the execution. If she failed, she was likewise subjected to the punishment of three whippings. After the death of the offender, each slave paid three pennies as a fine, to the proprietor. Leg. Athel. apud Brompt. 849.

† Leg. 15, 16. 22. That Saxons of one nation made slaves of the Saxons of another nation, if taken in war, appears from Bede, iv. 22. This custom must have furnished a great number of slaves.

‡ Leg. 271.

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that both had been redeemed at the same price; and that the master would be judged with the same rigour as he had exercised towards his dependants*. Nor were these unfortunate beings left without the hope of recovering their liberty; and this pleasing prospect acted as a powerful stimulus on their industry; for we read of some who acquired property sufficient to purchase their freedom. Others owed that benefit to the gratitude of their masters, many to the pity of the humane and charitable†. When the celebrated Wilfrid had received from Edelwalch, king of Sussex, the donation of the isle of Selsey, with two hundred and fifty male and female slaves, the bishop instructed them in the Christian faith, baptized them, and immediately made them free‡. Their manumission was an act of charity frequently inculcated by the preachers; and in most of the wills, which are still extant, we meet with directions for granting liberty to a certain number of slaves. But the commiseration of the charitable was more excited by the condition of the *wite theow* (those who had been reduced to slavery by a judicial sentence) than of such as had been born in that state, and had never tasted the blessing of liberty. By the bishops in the council of Calcuith it was agreed to free at their decease every slave of that description; and similar provisions are inserted in the wills of the lady Wenfleda, of Athelstan, son of king Ethelred, and of Ælfric, archbishop of Canterbury§. Their manumission, to be legal, was to be performed in public, in the market, in the court of the hundred, or in the church at the foot of the principal altar. The lord taking the hand of the slave, offered it

* Speln. Con. 405.

† Thus "Elfy the Red bought himself out for one pound." Lye, app. v. Brightmær purchased the freedom of himself, his wife Ælgiva, their children, and grandchildren, for two pounds. Hicks, Diss. Epis. 9. Siwin bought Sydefleda into perpetual freedom for five shillings and some pence. Ægilmar bought Sethryth for three mancuses to be free after the death of himself and his wife. Lye, app. v.

‡ Bed. iv. 13.

§ Wil. Con. 171. Mores, p. 63. Lye, app. v. Hicks, præf xxii. See also Hist. Ram. 407.

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to the bailiff, sheriff, or clergyman, gave him a sword and a lance, and told him that the ways were open, and that he was at liberty to go wheresoever he pleased*.

Before I conclude this subject, it is proper to add that the sale and purchase of slaves publicly prevailed during the whole of the Anglo-Saxon period. These unhappy men were sold like cattle in the market; and there is reason to believe that a slave was usually estimated at four times the price of an ox†. To the importation of foreign slaves no impediment had ever been opposed: the export of native slaves was forbidden under severe penalties‡. But habit and the pursuit of gain had taught the Northumbrians to bid defiance to all the efforts of the legislature. Like the savages of Africa, they are said to have carried off, not only their own countrymen, but even their friends and relatives; and to have sold them as slaves in the ports of the continent§. The men of Bristol were the last to abandon this nefarious traffic. Their agents travelled into every part of the country: they were instructed to give the highest price for females in a state of pregnancy; and the slave-ships regularly sailed from that port to Ireland, where they were sure of a ready and profitable market. Their obstinacy yielded, however, not to the severity of the magistrates, but the zeal of Wulstan, bishop of Worcester. That prelate visited Bristol several years successively; resided for months together in the neighbourhood; and preached on every Sunday against the barbarity and irreligion of the dealers in slaves. At last the merchants were convinced by his reasons, and in their gild solemnly bound themselves to renounce the trade. One of the members was soon

* Leg. ii. 229. 270. If a slave lived for a year and a day in any borough or castle, without being reclaimed by his master, he became free. New Rymer, i. 2.

† John bought Gunilda from Gada for half a pound of silver, and gave her to the church of St. Peter. Lye, app. v. Wulfric bought Elfgitha for half a pound. Egilsig bought Wynric for an yre of gold. Ibid. The toll in the market of Lewes was one penny for the sale of an ox, four pennies for that of a slave. Domesday.

‡ Leg. 17. 93. 107. 134. Malms. 8

afterwards tempted to violate his engagement. His perfidy was punished with the loss of his eyes*.

From the population of the country we may pass to the inhabitants of the cities and boroughs; of which a few perhaps might be of recent origin, having sprung up under the protection of some powerful chieftain, or celebrated monastery, but the greater part had existed from the time of the Romans, and successively passed into the hands of the Britons, Saxons, and Northmen. Of these the more early history is lost in the gloom of ages: it is only towards the close of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty that we are able to discover some, and those but imperfect, traces of their municipal polity, which seems to have been founded on the same principles as that which prevailed in the surrounding country. In both we discover the lord and the tenant; the lord with his reeve, his court, his right of tallage, and his receipt of rents, and fines, and forfeitures; and, on the other hand, the tenant, holding of the lord by every variety of service, from that which was deemed honourable to the lowest and most debasing. In the towns, however, this principle was variously modified to meet the wants and conveniences of large masses of men congregated on one spot: and hence it happened that their inhabitants gradually acquired advantages denied to their equals in the country. They possessed the benefit of a market for the sale of their wares and merchandise; they were protected by their union and numbers from the depredations of robbers and banditti; and, which subsequently proved to them a source of incalculable benefit, they formed one body politic with common rights and common interests. They had their hall or hanse-house in which they met and deliberated: they exercised the power of enacting *by* (or *borough*) laws for the government and improvement of the borough†; and they pos-

* Ang. Sac. ii. 258.

† In the charter of Thurstan, the first Norman archbishop of York, which secured to the burgesses of Beverley all the privileges enjoyed by

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sessed, by lease or purchase, houses, pasture, and forest-lands for the common use and benefit of the whole body*. This gradually led to the emancipation of the inhabitants: for the lords chiefly valued their own rights on account of the income derived from them; and, therefore, they felt no objection to transfer the exercise of such rights to the burgesses themselves, in return for a large sum of money, or for a yearly rent during a certain term. Of such bargains there are many instances in Domesday†.

The larger towns were divided into districts, called in some places "wards," in some "shires," and in others "ferlings, or quarters"‡. Among the inhabitants we meet with men of considerable wealth and influence, holding over their own property in the borough, and transmitting with it to their heirs, the enviable jurisdiction of sac and soc §. They had also their guilds

the citizens of York, we find mention of sums nanshus, ut ibi *pertractent statuta sua ad* ..., totius villatus emendationem. New Rym. i. 10. Now it should be observed that this charter, as appears on the very face of it, is not a grant of new, but a confirmation of former rights; and consequently refers to the Anglo-Saxon period. It supposes that the burgesses are already a body corporate with the right of self-government.

* Domesd. i. 1, 2. 100. 199. 154. 266; ii. 107.

† Thus the men of Dover had bargained with the king to furnish to him yearly twenty ships manned with twenty-one mariners each, during fifteen days, in return for the privilege of exercising over themselves the jurisdiction of sac and soc (Domesd. i. 1). The men of Oxford paid to him £20 a year, and a certain quantity of honey, in lieu of all customs (Ibid. 154). The citizens of Worcester had bought up every burthen but the land rent. Ibid. 172.

‡ Thus Cambridge and Stamford were divided into wards (Ibid. 189. 336); York into shires (298); Huntingdon into ferlings (203).

§ In Lincoln there were twelve individuals possessing this jurisdiction during the reign of Edward the Confessor at the time of the compilation of Domesday two of them were still alive and in possession; of five the sons were in possession; and the rights of the remaining five were held by five persons, probably heirs or purchasers of the property. Some writers have considered these twelve as local judges: but the record describes them in exactly the same words as it describes the holders of the same jurisdiction in several manors in the country "legemen, i. e., habentes sacam et socam." Domesd. i. 336. One of them, Ulf the son of Swartebrande, had also the right of toll and team. Ibid. Thus also in London several churches and citizens had the same right of sac and soc on their own property. Habeant socas suas cum omnibus consuetudinibus; ita quod hospites qui in sokis hospitabuntur, nulli dent consuetu-

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or companies, consisting in some, and probably in all, instances, of men of the same trade or profession, and possessing common property, and a common hall for the purposes both of consultation and entertainment *.

The principal magistrate was the provost, called the wic-reeve, to distinguish him from the shire-reeve, or reeve of the county. Whether he owed his situation to the nomination of the lord, or to the choice of the burgesses, is perhaps a doubtful question. The wic-reeve of the more populous towns is always mentioned as an officer of great importance, and sometimes numbered among the noblest in the land †. It was his duty to collect the revenue of the king or lord, to watch over his interests, and to exercise within the limits of the borough the same authority which the sheriff exercised within the shire. From the manner in which London, Winchester, York, Exeter, and some other places, are casually mentioned by the most ancient chroniclers, it is plain that the inhabitants formed distinct bodies of men, not only possessing forms of municipal government, but also exercising considerable influence in matters of state ‡.

In the different boroughs, sometimes in different divisions of the same borough, there prevailed a variety of local customs and services, the establishment of which originated in the wants, the caprice, or the favour of the several proprietors. For these the reader must consult the pages of Domesday, the only source of authentic informa-

dines nisi illi cujus soka fuerit, vel ministro suo quem ibi posuerit. New Rym. i. 11. I consider this charter as a confirmation of privileges, "quæ habuerunt antecessores eorum." Ibid.

* There was in London a guild of English knights possessing a soke and land both within and without the city (New Rym. i. 11; Stevens, ii. 89); and another in Winchester, near the East gate. They had a common hall, ubi potibant gildam suam. The land belonging to them let for forty-two shillings. Domes. iv. 531.

† Chron. Sax. 97. 102. The most ancient wic-reeve mentioned in history is Blæcca (Black or Blake), reeve of the city of Lincoln in 628. Bede ii. 16.

‡ Chron. Sax. 135. 143. 148. 150. 174. Encom. Emmæ, 15. Gul. Pict. 149. &c.

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tion on the subject: yet even there he will meet with only imperfect and unsatisfactory notices, which accidentally escaped from the pens of the compilers, whilst they sought to record, not the immunities and customs of the people, but the claims and the receipts of the sovereign.

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